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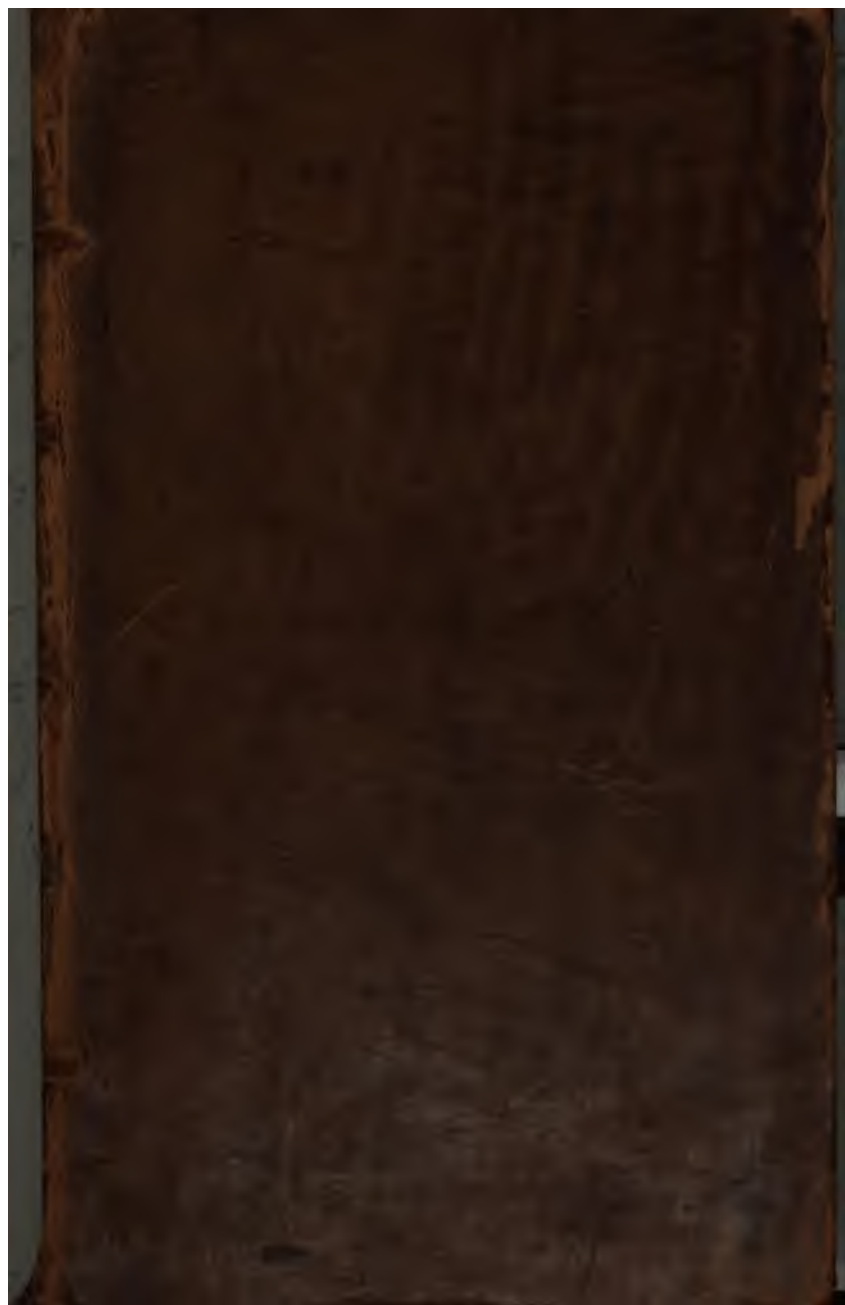
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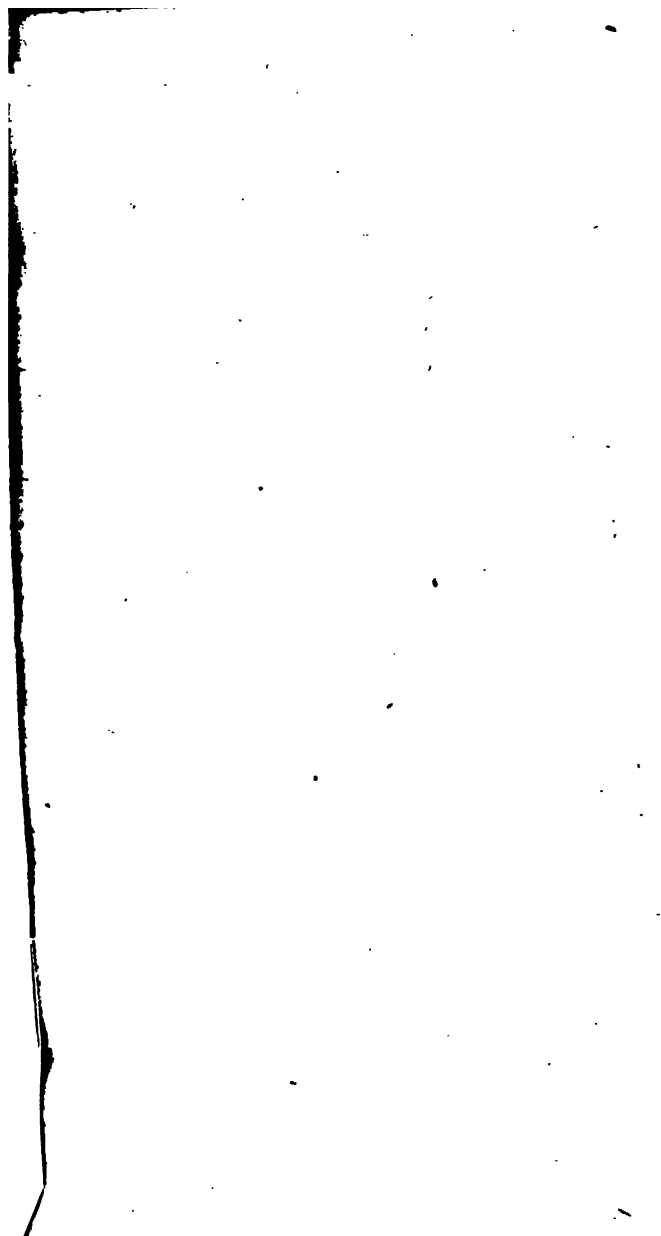
Mary

28 1764

March







THE
HISTORY
OF
PORTIA.

WRITTEN by a LADY.

What's female beauty but an air divine,
Through which the mind's all gentle graces
shine?

These, like the sun, irradiate all between; -
The body charms because the soul is seen:
Hence men are often captives of a face,
They know not why, of no peculiar grace.
Some forms, though bright, no mortal man can
bear;

Some none resist, though not exceeding fair.

Dr. Young's Univerf. Poess.

Vol. II.

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THE
HISTORY
OF
PORTIA.

CHAP. I.

The story of Portia continued.

WHEN this subject came first under my consideration, among the many circumstances of advantage which, in my opinion, resulted evidently from a diligent use of it, there were none that engaged my attention so closely, as the happiness my fair countrywomen were by this means likely to derive from the conjugal state; in regard to which, all the rest may be esteemed as little more than a kind of prelude, consisting however of a great variety of parts, that ought to be played over with the utmost

Vol. II. B

most care and exactness, by way of tuning the several instruments, in order to their producing that harmony and delight which is always to be expected from a good concert; but, on the contrary, should this precaution be at any time neglected, the whole operation to an intelligent ear, must consequently sound little less frightful than the hideous, discordant yell of cats and dogs.

Matrimonial happiness then, on the part of the women at least, may, I think, be very justly considered as the properest touchstone to try the intrinsic excellence of this my specifick; I say, particularly on the part of the women, because the purest gold may sometimes be, as I am afraid it too often is, shamefully adulterated by the mixture of baser metal, and its properties, during such an heterogeneous conjunction, may evidently appear so far injured, as to render it, upon trial, greatly inadequate to the true standard; it must be confessed, indeed, that the discipline of the crucible can perfectly restore all its native beauty and value again, but this generally proves a disagreeable experiment, and therefore the use of my cosmetic, if early and judiciously applied, may, in a great measure, prevent all the trouble and difficulty of such a process.

In

In short, to drop the allusion here, that system of female education, which impresses the principles of virtue deeply on the heart, by convincing the understanding, at the same time both of their necessity and utility, bids certainly the fairest for obtaining such a prize, in what however is too unjustly called the lottery of wedlock, as is most likely to insure the happiness abovementioned : but even this rule, successful as it may prove in general, cannot always be depended upon as infallible ; since it is scarcely possible for us to be thoroughly assured, otherwise than perhaps by woeful experience, that the virtue of the men, I mean the rectitude of their conduct in quality of husbands, is not altogether, as it ought to be, in exact proportion to the goodness of their understanding : the uncertainty in this case, it must be allowed, is sometimes the cause of much infelicity to women of the greatest merit, in their choice of partners for life ; and such indeed it proved in an extraordinary degree to the deserving Portia, whose story I entered upon in the last chapter ; but then it must likewise be allowed, that had this not been the case, her virtues, which, I believe, were as numerous and shining as ever yet adorned the female breast, could not how-

ever had an opportunity of appearing otherwise to so great advantage; for bright as the lustre of the finest brilliant may be, 'tis nevertheless supposed to be heightened still by the addition of a foil.

This advantage at least we women have certainly over the men, that their misconduct, whether in the capacity of lovers or husbands, though it can by no means countenance, much less justify ours, must however, by way of consolation, be always considered as an additional ensign in the triumph of our virtues; and yet the enjoyment of such a triumph, flattering as it may seem in speculation, is what very few of us, I believe, would originally chuse to stipulate for, in preference to that of endeavouring to constitute their happiness jointly with our own: that we are not more generally successful in those our endeavours, is, as I have before remarked, owing, in a very great measure, to a wrong bias in our education, but not always to this alone, for it will appear from the whole detail of Portia's story, both as maid, and wife, that it is in truth owing sometimes likewise to the want of more honour, more tenderness, and a juster sense of their true interest, in the men, as well in the character of lovers, as husbands.

When once a gentleman, by the particularity of his behaviour, and great assiduity, has given the strongest proofs of his attachment to the fair one whom he addresses, if she be a woman of strict virtue and honour, and he so fortunate as to engage her affection with the approbation of her friends, he ought by all means to be as perfectly explicit in the declaration of his passion, as he ought to be steady in preserving the high opinion of her that first inspired it, such a prize being well worth all his pains; he is in truth under a double obligation on this account, and such as I should think, must by every man of true spirit and good understanding be always held indispensable; the happiness, no less than the reputation of one, if not of both the parties, may here be very deeply concerned, inasmuch, that the man, who is capable of receding precipitately from such an engagement, or of trifling in so delicate a conjuncture, except he has the most unquestionable motives to justify his conduct, if he be not absolutely a knave, must at least be the dupe of his own credulity, and may, in either case, prove the instrument of much real affliction to a woman, perhaps of the greatest merit.





pertinence, and would only prove a cruel aggravation of her torment.

But still her friends had too weighty reasons not to dissuade her from insisting upon this request, which however they could not as yet venture to reveal to her; they therefore assured her, that his physicians had absolutely forbid it, from their apprehensions that her appearance would inevitably occasion such agitations in the patient, as might be productive of fatal consequences, perhaps to both; so that in this perplexed situation she was obliged to acquiesce for the present, far as it was from administering such relief as the dreadful anxiety and perturbation of her mind required; for besides the peculiar consideration of Machaon's being immediately the object of her own free choice, he had, as I observed before, been strenuously recommended by her mother, and all the rest of her friends, insomuch, that it could by no means be thought a weakness in her to cherish a passion for a man of his approved merit, with all the ardour, yet with all the purity, that love and virtue could suggest; and indeed, so long as she had the least reason to believe him sincere, though unfortunate, she wavered not a single moment in her affection for him.

Tradewell

Tradewell, it must be remembered, omitted not to revisit his friend Machaon on the evening of the same day, in which he had been so dangerously wounded, in hopes of being able to learn, from his own mouth, a more explicit account of his extraordinary adventure, than he had in the morning from his physicians and domesticks ; but so far was he from being indulged in this favour, that he was positively refused admission into the house, and obliged to return home without receiving any further satisfaction, in regard to his friend's health, than that he was so extremely ill, that he saw no company ; this at first very sensibly alarmed and chagrined Tradewell, as there had been a long intimacy subsisting between them ; but upon reflection, it only helped to strengthen the probability of his former conjecture, that his disorder must be that of madness, which had thus induced his relations, and the people about him to act with such extraordinary caution and reserve towards an old friend : however, it was his opinion, as well as Lucia's, that even the smallest hint of this conjecture should, on no account, be as yet communicated to Portia, the present state of her health and spirits visibly requiring the utmost aid that lenitives of every kind, not

corrosives, could possibly afford; she was accordingly informed by her brother, tho' somewhat evasively, that Machaon, to all appearance, was not worse; that his fever was not as yet advanced to the crisis, and that his physicians could undertake to pronounce nothing with certainty, till that event should be known; but that in the mean time they acted with so much tenderness and precaution, as to dissuade all his friends from desiring to see him.

This indeed afforded but very little, if any consolation at all to the highly afflicted Portia; but her friends were, for her sake, under the severe necessity of being obliged to temporize with her a little longer: her brother sent the next morning, as he did likewise for several succeeding ones, to enquire after the health of his friend, but received no other information from thence, than that Machaon had lately given positive orders to his servants that they should take in no more messages, or deliver any answers concerning him; yet Tradewell was far from being irritated at this, as an offence particularly levelled at him and his family, against whom, by the way, it was in truth alone intended, though they were at that time as entirely ignorant thereof, as they were wholly unconscious of having deserved such

such treatment ; it therefore only disposed him the more sincerely to commiserate the sad misfortune of his friend : however, a few days more had elapsed, when Tradewell was informed by some of his own servants, that Machaon must certainly be gone out of town, as his house was now quite shut up, and so indeed it prov'd ; but though this account had all the appearance of corroborating still his first opinion, and consequently that Machaon might, in all probability, be carried to some private mad-house out of town, both Lucia and he were nevertheless excessively embarrassed at this seemingly mysterious behaviour ; and therefore, from the palpable contempt that had been shewn to their anxiety, and to all their civilities, (to say nothing of the engagements that were subsisting) they determined, let the motive of his conduct be what it would, to keep the unhappy, but innocent Portia no longer in the agonies of suspense, but to disclose to her by gentle degrees, as much of this extraordinary procedure as they had hitherto from circumstances been able to penetrate ; not that their resentment or censure fell so immediately heavy upon Machaon himself, whom they still supposed to be in this deplorable disorder, as upon those of his

friends, who had been principally instrumental in bringing about this match, and had likewise, no doubt, a principal share in the late scene of rudeness and neglect with which they had all been treated.

Upon opening the affair therefore to Portia, with all the tender concern which the fondest parent and most affectionate brother could express, she seemed inclined at first to treat it merely as a finesse, or an expedient used by her friends to palliate either the sudden death, or infidelity of her lover; but upon their solemn assurance of the contrary, and upon giving her still a more minute account of every circumstance they had been able to discover, in relation to the nature of Machaon's illness, she became indeed almost distracted, and seemed, for the present, to be in scarcely a less wretched condition than himself; but when a sufficient interval of time had in some measure recomposed her agitated spirits, she could by no means be induced to give absolute credit to the conjecture of his being so suddenly seized with madness, especially as her brother, who had now been intimately acquainted with him for many years, had never once observed in him the least tendency towards a disorder of this kind, nor had ever heard of its being in his family:

family: there was one particular indeed, which, above all others, had made the deepest impression upon her, and that was the exclamation which Machaon had uttered, in relation to her having deceived both him and her brother, the morning in which the latter had visited him when he was first wounded; this, she thought, contained something too mysterious for her to unravel, and yet something too important to her peace not to attract her utmost attention; but all her sagacity, had it been much greater, might very well have failed her in the solution of this enigma, since the consciousness of her own innocence had rendered her wholly inaccessible to the guilt of such a charge; however, she was for some time obliged to submit to the opinion of her friends, though more from her respect for their authority and affection, than from an entire conviction in regard to the probability of the fact.

During this interval, she endeavoured to console herself in the best manner she could; the aids of reason and religion, as they were her first, so did they in the end prove her infallible resource; she considered, if the case should be in reality what her friends had strongly apprehended it, that she was then under the highest
 obliga-

obligations to be particularly thankful to providence, that had thus brought her so signal, and so seasonable a deliverance, before the irrevocable fiat had been pronounced, that must for ever have united her to Machaon; she had always looked upon the deprivation of reason as the heaviest misfortune that could befall the person so afflicted, and indeed, as the most mortifying spectacle that could possibly be exhibited to the view of mankind; her own family, she knew, had hitherto been entirely free from all hereditary disorders whatsoever, and she could not help thinking it a peculiar blessing, even in the midst of this scene of her affliction, to be at any rate prevented from becoming the unhappy instrument of entailing upon posterity so dreadful a malady as that of madness; and, on the other hand, should the case be otherwise than as her friends had apprehended, yet the unaccountableness of Machaon's behaviour towards her, his absence from, and total neglect of her, and all her family for the space of many weeks, without so much as attempting an apology, could not but fill her with such uneasy apprehensions, as must necessarily excite her resentment, in the same degree that it alarmed her affection,

confi-

considering the critical situation in which they had lately been engaged.

Having therefore brought herself by degrees to consider this affair, on both sides, in the light wherein I have now represented it, she at length appeared somewhat more tranquil and composed, tho' still very deeply dejected; but the great docility of her own disposition co-operated effectually on this occasion, with the excellent education she had received, that had early and faithfully instructed her how to make every tumultuous, and every disorderly passion wisely subservient to the discipline of reason: this conflict, however, was so manifestly at the expence of her health and peace of mind, that, a change of air being thought absolutely necessary, she retired for the present with her mother into the country, where she remained till time and proper assistance had at least restored her health of body, and in a great measure likewise re-instated her in the accustomed chearfulness of her disposition; but what contributed most essentially to facilitate the latter was, as I hinted before, the contempt which naturally arose from her own reflections, on the flagrant ingratitude and incivility of Machaon, from whom they had not heard a single syllable since the first moment

ment of his being taken ill ; there seemed indeed to be as yet a possibility that he was not altogether in fault, and that his behaviour might perhaps be placed, in part at least, to the account of his relations and friends ; and this bare possibility the faithful, the affectionate Portia would often endeavour to improve into the highest degree of probability ; but then, supposing him not to be in the unhappy disorder which was at first conjectured, when she considered, in that case, how intirely he was master of his own conduct, and yet how strongly appearances were against him, she could not, consistently with prudence or self-love, retain one mitigating sentiment in his favour, but strove, as much as she possibly could, to forget him quite.

Things seemed thus to be proceeding by degrees into their former calm and happy situation again, when, in a few days after Lucia and Portia had returned to town, they were sitting together one morning, and their servants informed them that a person had brought a letter, which, he said, he must deliver into Lucia's own hands, who immediately ordered him to be admitted, and on asking from whom he had brought the letter, the messenger replied, that the contents
would

would inform her, for he could not, and then hastily retired; upon opening the packet, she found one addressed to herself, with another enclosed for Portia. That to herself was couched in the following words.

To L U C I A.

“ Madam,

“ **W**HILE I had any reason to
 “ flatter myself with the hopes of
 “ gaining your lovely daughter’s affection, I confess; it was the first wish of
 “ my heart, and the darling object of all
 “ my ambition; nor am I insensible, that
 “ while I was endeavouring to accomplish this favourite point; I had both
 “ the honour and the happiness of meeting with your approbation, for which
 “ you justly merit my most grateful acknowledgments; but alas! Madam,
 “ notwithstanding this peculiar advantage, I now find myself obliged to relinquish all my fondest hopes of felicity, since I am convinced (though too late, I fear, to recover my peace of mind) that these fond hopes have all
 “ been raised by your goodness only.
 “ It was indeed to Portia’s love I would
 “ have been chiefly indebted for the blessing
 “ sing

“ sing of calling her mine ; but as events
“ of this nature are not always in our own
“ power, I carefully avoid all upbraid-
“ ings ; and the right, which you once
“ so obligingly gave me, I now beg leave
“ to transfer, (though heaven knows
“ with what reluctance) to some more
“ successful rival, whose superior merit,
“ I doubt not, but you will readily ap-
“ prove of, since the lovely Portia has so
“ judiciously distinguished it : for me, I
“ am reduced to the deplorable resolution
“ of quitting my native country, to a-
“ void, as well the odious circumstance
“ of being in any degree an obstacle to
“ her happiness, as that of being a more
“ immediate witness to the consummate
“ misery of, Madam,

“ Your faithful, but extremely

“ Unfortunate humble servant,

“ MACHA'ON.”

That to Portia was as follows :

To PORTIA.

“ Madam,
“ **S**INCE fate has deprived me of the
“ only felicity I prized in this world,
“ that of contributing to yours, I cheer-
“ fully

“ fully expose my life, not less as a sacrifice to your peace and cruelty, than as the only effectual expedient I have now left to rid myself of a burden, that I find is much too grievous to be borne longer; it will, however, be some consolation to me, even in the article of death, to flatter myself, that this melancholy, but sincere proof of my passion, how ill-fated soever it hath proved in regard to myself, may possibly help to convince you, how ardently I wished to promote your happiness; which, alas! must now be the employment of that too fortunate engrosser of all my Portia's charms.

“ Since therefore I find all hopes of succeeding in your affection as utterly impossible, as is that of living without you, I banish myself for ever from your presence, in order to seek that remedy in some far distant clime, which, if administered here, might perhaps give you some disquiet by a too late remorse, and unavailing pity for the highly injured and unhappy

“ MACHAON.”

The astonishment of both the ladies, when they had perused these extraordinary epistles,

epistles, could scarcely be equalled by any thing; but the rage and resentment of Tradewell, at the high indignity offered to his whole family in the person of his sister, whom the faithless Machaon had thus avowedly injured and insulted; they all agreed, it was but too evident, that he laid hold of the late accident which had befallen him, (whatever might have been the real occasion thereof) only as a mean artifice to break off the match, and fancied, that they now saw clearly into part of the vile subterfuge at least; for they concluded, that nothing but the prospect of a larger fortune, with some other lady, could have induced him thus ungenerously and abruptly to desert a woman of Portia's acknowledged merit, with whom he had been, to all appearance, as solemnly engaged, as the strongest obligations of love and honour could extend; where nothing, but the last ceremony, was wanting to render their union indissoluble: that he had lately received some dangerous wounds in a duel, was now out of all dispute, as Tradewell had been informed by the surgeon that attended him; but from whom, or on what account, they could as yet by no means penetrate; they were indeed strongly inclined to believe that it might, not improbably, be a deserved chastise-

chastisement for the exercise of his perfidious talents on some other believing female.

But be this as it will, Tradewell determined to make him feel likewise the dire effects of his vengeance, and to that purpose went instantly to find him out; but a few days before the delivery of his letters he had actually decamped, according to their import, in order to visit some foreign region, and intended, as Tradewell had learned from one of his acquaintance, to continue abroad for a considerable time, by which means, the prospect of satisfaction for the present was entirely lost.

Upon a deliberate review therefore of this whole procedure, both Lucia and Tradewell, as soon as their passion had a little subsided, seemed to hold in the utmost contempt, the man that could be capable of acting so base a part; and yet with no other end in view, as appeared to them, than barely that of making a most deserving young lady unhappy, who had never injured him, or indeed any other person: such an action, though it carries in appearance all the contrivance of a knave, can surely in fact afford matter of triumph to nothing higher in understanding than a fool.

Portia,

Portia, it must be owned, could not help feeling at first a more sedate resentment against him, and that in proportion to the degree of tenderness which she had once entertained in his favour; but she felt at the same time the inexpressible satisfaction of knowing, as well the purity of her own actions, as that of her intentions; and this, as it greatly mitigated her indignation, so did it likewise soon restore that tranquility of mind, which she had for some time been deprived of, by her anxious apprehensions for Machaon's safety, so long as she had any reason to suppose that he was faithful. She was very confident, that all who knew her would readily join in throwing the whole calumny upon the base deceiver; because no woman could possibly be more nicely strict in point of conduct than she herself had always been; her own conscience therefore, together with the opinion of her friends, having thus fairly acquitted her, she hoped, and with great justice, that the world would do so too; for as these are two supreme courts, before which every body must at one time or other appear, however secure of a verdict in her own favour, she might possibly think herself in the former, she yet by no means neglected the approbation of the latter,

latter, having frequently observed, that a contempt of reputation did but too generally lead by degrees to an absolute contempt of virtue.

C H A P. II.

Continuation of Portia's story; comparison between her conduct and that of the present race of young women of fashion: in what particular the latter may be thought to resemble the ladies of Sparta: the authoress here takes an opportunity of recommending to the consideration of her fair readers, the vast advantage of putting always a proper value upon their own charms; which, she thinks, can never be accomplished by exposing themselves too frequently to publick view; one main end of her cosmetick is to prevent this, since otherwise, beauty must inevitably become too cheap and contemptible: Portia's example is strenuously recommended on this occasion, as she was a perfect mistress of the whole secret of the grand cosmetick: her story, which helps to illustrate this, proceeds on to the celebration of her nuptials.

I Believe it will hardly be denied, that Portia's whole conduct, particularly in regard to the interesting event recited in
the

the last chapter, (though it was indeed the first of the kind that she had ever been engaged in) deserved at least the approbation of all the judging part of her own sex; 'tis true, she soon seemed to acquiesce under the disappointment of a lover, who, before the appearance of his perfidy, was indeed extremely dear to her; and yet the latter part of his behaviour had something in it so dark and mysterious, and at the same time so totally different from the former, that it would almost have induced any woman of less sensibility and penetration than Portia was mistress of, to have suspended her resentment for a while, in hopes of coming to such an eclclaircissement, as might perhaps have established a perfect reconciliation, especially when it is considered, that this seeming acquiescence in her was by no means the effect of her want of passion; for that she had felt a more than common tenderness for the ungenerous Machaon, neither honour, nor good sense, nor yet the strictest rules of female nicety, in the crisis of so near an union, could with reason oblige her to disown; and that she still felt the same, in no small degree, notwithstanding the strong proofs she had received of his ingratitude, was, in fact, but too true; altho', in obedience to the dictates of virtue

the and prudence; she hesitated not to make an absolute sacrifice of this passion, at a time when it was manifestly to the prejudice of her health and peace of mind: but in her the Seeds of virtue and discretion had early been implanted, as in the happiest soil, the due culture and improvement whereof had been attended to with no less industry than success.

Such was the manner of her education, absurd and inelegant as it may at this day appear; nor was she upon that account less, but far more eminently qualified to acquit herself with true fortitude and greatness of mind, than even her illustrious name sake, the celebrated wife of Brutus, the bare prospect of fame in this world, immortal as the latter vainly thought it, (such being the credulity of the human mind unenlightened by superior wisdom) was consequently thought by her a sufficient motive to undertake the achievement of the greatest things, to practice self-denial, and bear the most excruciating pains without a murmur; whereas to the former, the prospect of a crown immortal, of a crown celestial, avouched upon undeniable authority, could only be the adequate reward of virtue and true religion.

How different from this is the present turn of female education? the virtue of

many Greek and Roman ladies was confessedly transcendent ; and though its motive, on comparison, fell infinitely short of ours, yet still it was amiable, and highly animated beauty ; which, by the way, fully evinces the utility of my cosmetic ; how strong and exemplary does it appear, even in its transmission to posterity ; how emphatically does it extort our imitation ? the finished females of the present age seem indeed, in one respect at least, to be bred up greatly in the Spartan taste ; that, I mean, of being quite fearless, with this additional improvement however, of fearing not even indecency, no nor infamy itself ; so that they as far exceed the Grecian model, on the wrong side, as they seem ambitious of keeping short of it ; on the right ; for the celebrated intrepidity of those Spartan dames was, in truth, not less an absolute freedom from all immorality and vice, and particularly from every conscious violation of modesty, than it was, from the abject Slavery of all imaginary terrors, which are so apt to weaken and debase the mind ; whereas, among our modern heroines, this decent establishment seems to be totally inverted.

That strange fashion indeed, which we have been told, prevailed so universally among the Lacedemonian ladies, of having cer-

tain small apertures in various parts of their upper garments, if faithfully reported, is, I confess, justly liable to the severest censure ; but I have lately been informed by a gentleman, who is both a learned antiquarian and judicious historian, that this fact hath been vilely exaggerated, and that the fashion, thus misrepresented, had its original rise, much more unquestionably, from the necessity of the climate, which, for the most part, is intolerably hot, than either from any settled design to encourage an unguarded licentiousness in attire, or even from the ridiculous vanity, so common among ourselves, of exhibiting perhaps a transient glimpse of an elegant, and finely proportioned limb : but supposing this last circumstance to be the real motive for introducing that whimsical fashion amongst the Spartan fair, will it not still be thought more consistent with modesty and true delicacy, than the impolitick, not to say indecent, practice of unmercifully displaying too much at once.

If the Spartan ladies, and particularly the married ones, had so scrupulous a regard to decency, that, next to the actual violation of their chastity, appearing abroad unveiled was always considered as the most heinous offence they could possi-

bly commit against it, what judgment is to be found of the present race, both of virgins and matrons amongst ourselves? who seem to think it highly absurd that any thing, but ugliness or shame, should now be muffled up in a veil: the difference of climates is, no doubt, very considerable; yet, notwithstanding the allowance that is to be made for the extraordinary degree of Warmth which prevails in some, I should however think it hardly powerful enough to produce universally such an effect on the constitutions of the inhabitants, as might be able to subvert and destroy the laws of decency, which are founded in reason, which ought to subsist, and which always have subsisted, at least in all civilized countries: in those of the east particularly, we find the use of the veil to have obtained even so early as in the days of Abraham; and not without a view to the true Emolument of the sex in general, but more especially still to that of beauty; for Abimelech thought he could not pay a higher compliment to the extraordinary beauty of Sarah, than by presenting her with a veil; though it must be confessed, that it was at the same time a severe reproof for her want of caution in venturing abroad without one.

But

But whatever allowance, on account of climate, may possibly be made for the ladies of the east, in regard to the negligence and looseness of their apparel, surely those of the northern regions can hardly expect to be comprehended within the privilege of such an allowance; and we, in England, I think, as little as any of the rest, who are subject to so unaccountable a variety and uncertainty in our atmosphere; yet, so strong is our propensity for admiration, that we nevertheless go on to expose ourselves, without the least restraint, to all the inclemency of such a climate, and, what is still more fatal, to the very contempt of those by whom we would be admired; nay by far the greatest number of us are now grown so intrepid, as to dare to let the world see, that we have no charms; and yet very few of us, I believe, can in the event, boast with truth, that the profuseness of our sincerity, upon this occasion, is able to apologize effectually for so deplorable a defect.

Those indeed, who haply come under the denomination of beauties, would seem, by their conduct, to persuade the world to look upon decency, if at all as a virtue, yet only fit to be practised by the frightful and the vulgar; an unlimited

tinues in scarcity, will still retain it inestimable value.

But says the flippant nymph, by folly rendered far less fair than nature had intended her, of what consequence, pray then, is beauty, if it is not to be seen? surely the diamond can never display its lustre in the mine; true, nor is it dug up and polished with such incredible labour and expence, to be prostituted on every stall, or vilely hawked about in every pedlar's box; when virtue and wisdom are the guardians of beauty, its charms will always command reverence, as well as love; it never can be then improperly exposed to view; whenever it appears, unabated admiration becomes the willing tribute of every spectator; not vanity its triumph, though its power proves invincible, and its success as rapid as that of Cæsar, when he came, and saw, and conquered.

Conquest, I know, is no less the darling ambition of us women, than it is of the men; we affect to conquer those who conquer all the world besides; it is generally esteemed by us as the chief test of beauty; be it so, but let us not, like our enterprising neighbours, the *French*, injudiciously make conquests, at a vast expence, which either are not tenable when made,

made, or are not worth the keeping : the first conquest, I would recommend to the attention of my fair country-women, is that over their own hearts, and particularly over their vanity ; success in this makes much a quicker progress, than is commonly imagined, towards a conquest over those of other people ; it blunts effectually the stings of envy and ill-nature, and soon corrects the too fond propensities of self-love ; the acquisition of esteem is the certain consequence thereof, without whose friendly alliance the whole artillery of female charms but operates to little purpose, since happiness hath irreversibly decreed that love, without esteem, can never pay the full price of beauty.

By so complete a conquest as this, over our own hearts, how unlovely soever we may have appeared before, we are instantly vested with the power of becoming all amiable and fair ; and on the contrary, from being by nature's bounty all angelick before, we may, by the neglect of this conquest, become downright disagreeable and frightful : in short, the whole secret of the grand cosmetick consists in the accomplishment of this desirable point ; it's aim being not less the improvement of happiness, than it is of beauty ; and of this important secret the amiable Por-

tia was indeed a perfect mistress, as I hope the sequel of her history will abundantly confirm; to which I shall now beg my reader's leave to return.

After the departure of the faithless Machaon, in the abrupt manner related in my last chapter, the injured, but unresenting Portia, lived extremely retired for near the space of two years, and that chiefly in the country; where, added to the instructive society of an excellent mother, and a few select friends, she enjoyed without interruption all that calm serenity of mind, which fits us best for contemplation and the relish of true happiness: but about the expiration of this period, she was unavoidably obliged to relinquish her agreeable retreat, by the unexpected arrival of her brother Dennis from Amsterdam, who came purposely to make a visit to his friends in England, and was not altogether without hopes of being able to obtain Lucia's permission, that his sister Portia might accompany him in his return thither; but in this request he could not succeed, it being by no means a scheme that was agreeable to either of those ladies.

Dennis had, it seems, some few years before, contracted an intimate friendship with an English gentleman abroad, who, at the commencement of their acquaintance,

tance, was secretary to one of the most lucrative embassies that is sent from the crown of Great Britain; and as this friendship of theirs had all along been warmly supported by reciprocal proofs of the most disinterested benevolence and integrity, so did it subsist at this time in the full height of its fervour; which, by the way, made no small addition to the motive of Dennis's present visit: the gentleman, his friend, whom I shall call by the name of Careless, was now settled in London, and possessed at this time of two very profitable employments under the government, besides a handsome paternal estate in the north of England; so that he lived in affluence and splendor, and received and entertained his old friend with no less sincerity than elegance: and indeed Dennis, even in the immediate article of his business, had repeatedly experienced the agreeable effects of this friendship; for besides other advantages that accrued to him from thence, Careless had interested himself so successfully in his favour, as to obtain an order that all the remittances, which were made on account of the embassy before-mentioned, as well as on some others, should pass through his hands; so that long before this particular period, these services had

given Careless many opportunities of being well known, and a just right to be treated, as he was, with peculiar distinction, in the family of Dennis's younger brother Charles, the merchant, in London ; besides the circumstance of his having occasionally had bills of exchange for considerable sums to negotiate with the latter.

The ancestors of Careless had, it seems, been always remarkable for their inviolable fidelity and attachment to the true interest of their country ; and their descendants valued themselves not less on that account, than for the honour of having derived their pedigree from the first sole monarch of Britain ; the father of Careless had particularly the honour to command a regiment in the service of England, as likewise that of being a general officer : under the auspicious influence therefore of so fair a prospect of interest, as all these flattering circumstances seemed to exhibit, Careless, being an only child, added to a natural good understanding all the useful, as well as ornamental Advantages of a liberal education, and moreover, what is not very common among the young and gay, an early and close application to business ; so that it is not at all wonderful, that we find him at this time basking

ing in the sun-shine of court-favour : to his person indeed nature seemed to have been rather profusely kind, for he had the face of an Adonis ; he was of the taller size, and perfectly well shaped ; travel, and frequent conversation with the polite world, had given him that peculiar ease of manner, and agreeable facility of address, which, in all civilized nations, so happily characterize the man of faction ; he had moreover such a fund of wit and humour, so much life and expression in his eyes, that, wherever he appeared, he soon became the darling of the fair ; none of whom, however, had as yet been able to subdue his volatile heart, which triumphed not a little in the fond persuasion, that the security of its freedom was altogether impregnable ; but in this, notwithstanding the vast extent of his power (tho' he was in truth no coxcomb) he happened to be quite mistaken ; as, I may venture to affirm, every commander in chief of an army, must be, who precipitately hazards the issue of a battle, before he knows the true strength of the enemy ; for the charming Portia, with whom Careless had now more frequent opportunities of conversing, by his repeated visits to her brother Dennis, she, I say, soon convinced this redoubted hero, that the
 impreg-

impregnable fortrefs of his heart was in some danger ; and that the higheft flights of wit and humour, together with the whole parade of personal accomplishments, can no more fecure the envied owner from the shafts of love, than the higheft honours, and the greateft affluence, can from thofe of death at the appointed hour.

In fhort, Portia had irrevocably captivated this roving fwain, who would gladly now have facrificed to her fmiles his fo much boasted liberty ; but the ingratitude and indignity, with which fhe had been treated by the ungenerous Machaon, rofe frefh in her remembrance, and deterred her from liftening to the addreffes of Carelefs with that complacency and attention, which perhaps fhe otherwife might have done, as fhe confefled it impoffible, that any woman could be wholly infenfible of his merit. In this ftate of uncertainty, therefore, he applied to the good offices of his friend Dennis, whom he had long before made the confident of his paffion, and who indeed had interefted himfelf in the fuccefs thereof with all imaginable ardour and fincerity ; yet he could not, at the fame time, but greatly applaud his fifter, for the caution and prudence which fhe determined to make the invariable

invariable rule of every part of her conduct ; so that his advice to Careless was, by no means to press the affair too warmly, but to leave it to time, and the assiduity of his passion, to bring about the full completion of his wishes ; which, according to his observation, was not to be despaired of, as Careless was assured of always meeting with the most polite reception in his brother's family.

The house of Tradewell, especially whenever Lucia and Portia were in town, was the well known resort of many of the eminently wise and virtuous of both sexes ; hither they came, as to a kind of academy, to improve and entertain each other, but never by the propagation of scandal or vanity ; Portia was indeed not like the generality of her own sex, vain, trifling, and anxiously industrious to lay snares for new lovers ; was the affection of one man of merit to be obtained upon no other terms than these, I am satisfied, she would have continued single for her whole life ; she felt without doubt, and that in no small degree, the taste for amusements, which is so natural to all young people, but then she had acquired the happy art of indulging her's only with such as were rational, innocent at least, if not highly instructive ; for o-
therwise

therwise, to her, they ceased to be amusements; that of conversation amongst a few sensible friends was always her first choice, and such as afforded her more real gratification, than all the vain parade of an assembly, or the tumultuous riot of a ball; in the former there was something that she might always appropriate, something to carry off from thence as her own; from the latter nothing, in fact, but disgust and fatigue; except indeed, that the being immoderately stared at by one sex, and as immoderately envied on that account by the other, may be esteemed, and I cannot help thinking, that it too frequently is by a multitude of women, as the most supreme of all amusements.

But this would have given Portia rather exquisite pain than pleasure; nor was she under a necessity of trying the success of an experiment, so thoroughly disagreeable to herself, how flattering soever the view, with which it is undertaken, may generally be imagined; for though all who saw her, as certainly found something in her to admire; yet, without being exposed to the probable ill consequences of aspiring at publick and promiscuous admiration, she had the happiness of finding a sufficient homage paid to her charms, and likewise of having all her hours, in-

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tended for amusement, most agreeably engaged, either at home, or at some friend's House, in the society of people, if not of the first quality, at least, of the first merit, whole approbation, as she was convinced that it was not less the result of sincerity than judgment, made always her highest pleasure; and from this approbation it is, as well as from my own knowledge of its being justly founded, that I venture to pronounce the following lines of Milton, as not inapplicable to the character of my ever honoured, and much admired friend.

Wisdom in discourse with her
 Loses discountenanced, and like folly shews;
 Authority and reason on her wait,
 As one intended first, not after made
 Occasionally; and to consummate all,
 Greatness of mind, and nobleness their
 feat
 Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
 About her, as a guard angelick placed.

But Portia's present scene of happiness, great as it was, or indeed that of any other young lady, in her situation, could hardly be thought perfect, so long as any material circumstance was wanting to increase it, that might be reasonably in her own power to supply; and by this circumstance

cumstance, my readers will easily comprehend, I mean that tender intercourse of mutual Love and friendship, that results from the willing and inseparable union of two fond hearts in the conjugal state ; which, without all doubt, from its peculiar variety of endearing resources, was originally intended to constitute our highest felicity in this world ; and which, when judiciously engaged in, will, I believe, even in the present pious times, be generally allowed to answer that desirable end, more effectually than any other scheme is capable of doing : as no woman therefore could, by the strength of superior judgment, be more thoroughly convinced of this truth, than was the amiable Portia, so no woman, I believe, ever exerted greater fortitude, in making every wayward inclination of her own submit implicitly to all its dictates ; and I may also add, as a further confirmation of her title to success, that few women were ever more justly distinguished for personal merit than herself.

The crisis of her fate however was now near at hand, when it was soon likely to appear, how far all her prudence, and all her merit, might be able to secure that felicity which was so justly her due ; for Careless, in the further prosecution of his suit,

suit, had acted with so much policy and address, that, by the assistance of his friend Dennis, he effectually gained over the whole family to his interest, who began to consider his alliance, not only as unexceptionable; but highly desirable; while Portia, whose sincerity and openness of heart was equal to the rest of her virtues, being pressed a little by her mother, confessed that she had but one objection to the match proposed; that, in regard to the person, understanding, and accomplishments of Careless, she believed, the most critical, or fantastical of her whole sex, could find nothing to condemn; that she felt in herself as small a propensity to avarice, as to ambition, and consequently that she had nothing to object to him on account of fortune; but as her happiness was to depend still more essentially on the temper, the principles, and the true character of her husband, than upon circumstances seemingly more striking, because they came more immediately under observation, she thought it absolutely necessary to acquire as perfect a knowledge of the former as she possibly could, before she finally resolved to embark on a voyage for life.

But Careless wanted not powerful friends to make the most favourable report of him upon
upon

upon this occasion ; he assured his beloved Portia, that, from the first moment of his being acquainted with her, which was now upwards of four years, he had incessantly sighed for her in secret ; that, from the inferior state of his fortune at that time, he despaired of success, or he had then made her an offering of his heart ; and that on the death of his father, and his own preferment, which immediately ensued, he had firmly intended it, but was prevented by being informed of her engagement with Machaon, which blasted all his hopes of happiness, and plunged him into the lowest abyss of misery and despair ; from whence the strange revolution that afterwards happened in that gentleman's heart had alone recovered him, as it gave him an opportunity of pleading the unalterable passion he had so long entertained for her : he expected not absolute credit, he said, barely upon his own assertion, but referred her, for the truth of every thing he advanced, to her brother Dennis, who had long been the confident of his passion for the lovely Portia, and whose affection for her, in every thing that regarded her true happiness, should be considered as a sufficient security against the apprehension of any unmerited favour, or partiality, that his
friendship

friendship for Careless could possibly incline him to shew, on so important an occasion ; more especially as his integrity was always known to be without the least blemish.

This candid behaviour in Careless made all Portia's remaining hesitation soon subside ; inclination, it must be confessed, pleaded very powerfully in his favour ; but still she consented not to crown his wishes, till he had previously obtained in form the sanction of all her friends approbation to ratify her choice ; which, as they had for a considerable time been prejudiced in his favour, was speedily accomplished ; so that after a short interval allowed for making all the necessary preparations, this agreeable couple were at length happily united.

But here I must not omit to observe, for fear of being thought deficient in a matter of so great consequence to the true emolument of mankind, that the celebration of these memorable nuptials was performed in the country, and that all the young ladies of Portia's acquaintance assisted at the ceremony, like so many blooming daughters of the spring, decked with every sumptuous ornament that could possibly contribute to the embellishments of beauty, but far more charming

ing still in virgin modesty arrayed ; all these, I say, accompanied by the virtues and the graces, in decent cavalcade, made up the lovely Portia's bridal train, and strewed flowers before her in the way, as they conducted her to the temple ; thither the thrice happy Careless, with exalted mien, had halted on before, where Hymen waited to receive their plighted vows ; from hence, as soon as the awful ceremony was over, the company all adjourned to Tradewell's villa, where an entertainment was provided for them, equal, in point of elegance, as well as profusion, to his large fortune, and calculated not less to honour the distinguished merit of the wedded pair, than to promote that cheerfulness and festive gaiety of heart that ought always to reign on so joyous an occasion.

At night, in order to render this scene still more magnificent, a superb firework was play'd off, in which were exhibited, to the great amusement of all the spectators, several curious emblematical figures ; amongst the rest, particularly that of beauty, supported on one side by virtue, and on the other by wisdom, with true happiness close in the rear, and Cupid in the front, presenting in a suppliant posture a great number of hearts, and his whole quiver, in token of absolute subjection :

jection : this little group, distinguishable by the respective ensigns that peculiarly characterised each of them, was so contrived, that, like the asbestos, they appeared to be wholly incapable of being consumed by the power of the flames ; while numberless other female figures, but attended by a very different train, viz. by coquetry, by vanity, and folly, either dazzled the eyes of the beholders, perhaps for the Space of a single minute or so, and then vanished for ever into smoke and oblivion ; or, if by the force of superior charms they happened to succeed in the conquest of a heart, they were yet wholly at a loss how to preserve it, since discord, that spurious brat of self-love, was always sure to assume the post of happiness, and blast irrecoverably the whole triumph of beauty.

After many other ingenious representations, in the same way, the evening, as is usual on such occasions, concluded with a grand ball, in which the charming Portia, comparatively with all the other fair ones present, appeared like Diana among her nymphs ; or indeed, to convey still a more lively image of her beauty, it appeared as transcendently bright, and yet as mild, as the superior lustre of the moon, in the full height of all its splendor,

dor, when compared with the distant twinkling of the stars.

C H A P. III.

Continuation of Portia's story.

THE exquisite happiness derivable from the conjugal union, when virtue, judgment, and inclination co-operate mutually in both the parties, is much easier to be imagined, than it can be described, except by those who have thoroughly experienced it; which, it must be confessed, the couple mentioned in my last chapter did in the highest degree; they, both of them, abounded in what the world allow to be good Sense, seemed to have consummate virtue, and an inexhaustible fund of affection for each other, in so much that Careless, who for some years behaved as the sincere, the bosom friend of his beloved Portia, was often known, from the fulness of a fond heart, to repeat the following lines out of Milton.

Nothing

So much delights me, as those graceful acts,
Those thousand decencies that daily flow
I from

From all her words and actions, mixed
 with love
 And sweet compliance, which declare un-
 feigned
 Union of minds, or in us both one soul ;
 Harmony to behold in wedded pair.

This picture, as highly finished as it appears to be, was nevertheless the exact portrait of the amiable Portia ; if her beauty and many virtues, while yet in her virgin state, claimed, with any degree of justice, a right to that envied power of charming, which she had acquired, they now blazed out to infinitely greater advantage, having an additional incentive, and, of all others, surely the most powerful in such a case, that of being, as it were, collected to a point by a strong desire of pleasing the beloved object, which necessarily occasioned their operating with still greater force : and indeed the happy Careless, as I have just observed, was, for a considerable time, so far from seeming inattentive to the true value of such a blessing, that he rather seemed to be strongly actuated, both by affection and a deep sense of honour, to do all the justice in his power to the deserving instrument thereof ; and by consulting her happiness with the tenderest assiduity, to con-

vince her how sensible he was that, at the same time, he highly enhanced his own.

Thus, for some years, did this engaging couple go on in a continued course of virtue and happiness, industriously regarding even the minutest circumstance, which they thought capable of improving the latter, provided always, that it was found to be strictly consistent with the dictates of the former : with this disposition they would frequently go into different companies, that they might return to each other with new delight ; where they were always sure of finding that rational entertainment, that can alone compensate for the painful attention, and loss of time, which ceremony too often indispensibly obliges us to bestow on trifles ; but particularly, if the fatigues of business, or any of the more untoward occurrences of life, from which no condition of mortality is wholly exempted, had at any time affected the spirits of Careless, or given him even a momentary discomposure of temper, he was sure to find, at home, a sovereign balm for that and every other woe, in the sensible, the endearing society of his truly affectionate wife ; whose whole behaviour sufficiently convinced him, that he was now fully possessed of all the sweets domestic happiness could yield ; for it

must

must be remarked, that Portia's prudence, in the management of her household, was not less distinguishable, than her affection for her husband; which latter indeed brought forth every latent virtue to its full maturity.

Though the estate which Careless inherited from his father was not a great one, his whole income, including the addition of Portia's fortune, being by no means inconsiderable, was however at this time such as might very well have allowed them to live, if they chose it, in all that State of Splendor and Dissipation, which is now thought so essentially necessary towards making a becoming eclat in the gay world; but this she had the wisdom to stipulate previously against, being perfectly inconsistent, both with her own natural disposition, and, in her present situation, with the prospect of an increasing family: as an indulgence in the mere vanities of life made by no means a part of her happiness, she transferred many of those expences, that are usually incurred by the superior elegance of female taste, to very different uses, yet to such as afforded her, in that way, an infinitely greater pleasure, than they otherwise possibly could, viz. to the relief of indigent objects, whom, in proportion to the weight

of their afflictions, she thought far more worthy thereof: but this she did indeed with so much alacrity, as obliged her to disclaim all pretensions to the boasted merit of that self-mortification, which is sometimes observed to be the attendant on charitable acts.

In short, in her house reigned one continued scene of harmony and peace, yet without any of the insipidity of a dead calm; as did likewise that of plenteousness, without any of the fatal consequences of too liberal a profusion: whether from a higher degree of understanding, joined to the force of an excellent example, or merely from the peculiar favour of fortune, I shall not determine, but such was the good order, the diligence and fidelity of all their domesticks, so exactly punctual were they in the performance of their respective duties, and in observing the hours appointed for employment and rest, for devotion, repast, and amusement, that this family may justly be said to have resembled some small, but well-regulated monarchy, wholly independent within itself; where the wife, like an able first minister of state, of consummate probity and wisdom, [if with such a treasure as this heaven has yet ever vouchsafed to bless any of the numerous kingdoms of the earth]

earth] in exerting the power, which was delegated to her by her husband, always judiciously tempered so much lenity with rigour, such well-proportioned rewards with punishment, as seldom failed to promote thereby not only their own mutual happiness, but that also of all their domesticks, without which indeed their own would have been esteemed by them as quite imperfect.

The great advantages which Portia had acquired both from books, and a constant intercourse and conversation with people of superior wisdom and knowledge to herself, very naturally inclined her to avoid all intimate connection with the gay unthinking part of her own sex, as well as with the less improved, and more immoral part of the other; being totally at a loss how to reconcile to the dictates of reason and prudence the unaccountable, but too common practice of trifling away time, amidst repeated scenes of fashionable follies, which she observed to reign triumphantly amongst both; and though she was really possessed of every requisite to render herself extremely agreeable in the most polite assemblies, yet, for the reason just assigned, she often preferred the being alone, where, however, she was always employed, but never embarrassed:

her temper, by the constant exertion of reason, was all placable and gentle, tho' her passions, if raised, were very strong; but then they were so strictly guarded, that most of the common accidents of life found her always inaccessible to their attacks: she had indeed a strength of judgment far above the common standard of most female minds, yet was she so totally free from vanity on this account, that it might be said, with truth, she was in a manner careless of fame, or rather, that she seemed a niggard of her knowledge, except amidst the happy circle of her chosen friends, and to them she would shine out in full splendor.

She possessed too true a greatness of soul, to suffer herself to be dazzled or captivated by the mere external grandeur of what is commonly called high life, or ever to bow the knee to any of the successful efforts of ambition; she looked down on the incorrigible immoralities of the great world, with as much detestation and contempt, as she treated the merit and good sense of those, who had perhaps little else to recommend them, with singular deference and respect: but particularly, amongst her many other virtues, she never omitted to behave towards her inferiors with great affability and condescension,

cension, and used to say, that there was a degree of humanity in so doing which she thought indispensable; that the distinctions of superiority, though sometimes reasonable, when immediately founded in merit, were however, for the most part, merely adventitious and accidental; and often undeserved, though as often confidently assumed; that as virtue alone gave true distinction and dignity, the condition of life, how abject soever in which that was found, should notwithstanding be always esteemed highly respectable; that the affability and politeness, with which we usually address our superiors and equals, has in truth but little merit, in comparison with that we ought to shew towards our inferiors; it being though a kind of voluntary tax on that boasted distinction, yet such, in fact, as necessarily preserves the very essence thereof; and proves the equity of its being always promptly paid; which pride alone, that monstrous offspring of ignorance and wealth, refuses to acknowledge: it is indeed, of all other taxes whatsoever, by much the least expensive, and although it cannot be absolutely demanded, as of right, since it is altogether arbitrary, yet still it ought to be punctually paid, as a small, though in some degree a grateful

compensation for the comparative abjectness of an inferior condition ; but especially, as without the punctual payment thereof, all true distinction, how cavalierly soever it may be claimed, becomes utterly void in itself.

But further still, abstract the influence of wealth, and how small a share of distinction and respect would many of the nobles, whom I could name, be intitled to ; and yet, in fact, money can no more purchase true friendship or esteem, which are the chief motives of respect, than it can purchase love ; for attachments of this kind, where virtue, merit, and beauty, centre in the same object, are altogether involuntary : 'tis true indeed, wealth can sometimes procure at least the semblance both of love and friendship ; but this is often no more than the delusion of art, and our own self-love together, the whole force whereof, if once detected, as it very easily may be, by a judicious observer, is instantly destroyed ; because it is sincerity alone, which constitutes the real value of both, that can fairly stand the test ; to establish which, besides the necessity of a length of time, merit must set off virtue to advantage, in one case, as sympathy of inclination must, in the other, before any just estimate

mate can be found in regard to the security of either.

By such sentiments as these did Portia direct the manner of her behaviour towards all her fellow-creatures ; but these sentiments were derived from still a higher source ; they flowed immediately from an habitual practice of the christian religion, from an unalterable conviction of the rectitude of its principles ; for indeed she was, in the justest sense of the expression, truly religious ; without the least tincture of superstition, on the one hand, or enthusiasm on the other ; her piety and devotion were rational, and proceeded from the most awful reverence, gratitude, and love, for the supreme being ; and yet the consciousness of her own unblameable conduct, whether in the character of daughter, wife, mother, or mistress of a family, never once inspired her with the uncharitable pride of censuring those who failed in some points of their duty ; the social tenderness of her disposition ever suggested a strong degree of compassion and allowance for the weakness and infirmities of human nature, and where her purse could not be useful, her advice, example, and instruction often were.

In this manner did the life of Careless, and that of his beloved Portia glide on

for some years, in an uninterrupted state of harmony and the highest blifs; the constant flow of prosperity and fuccefs, that attended their worldly affairs, appeared only as the juft reward of all their virtues; in fhort, there feemed to be in them but one foul to animate two bodies, to lighten happinefs, by making it always mutual; by all their real friends they were fincerely efteemed, by their children moft tenderly beloved and revered, and by their domefticks almoft adored; they were indeed the admiration, if not the envy, of every body elfe who knew them: but alas! the very beft -conftituted fystems of human felicity are fometimes obferved to prove inftable; nor am I by any means certain, that viciffitudes of this kind are, with juftice, always to be efteemed as real misfortunes; fince, otherwife, 'tis not altogether improbable, but we might grow by degrees into a kind of habitual fecurity, and an impious forgetfulnefs of that bounteous fource, whence all our bleffings flow, and become utterly regardless of all preparation for that inevitable period, which is to be the commencement of a ftill happier ftate: there feems to be interwoven in the very conftitution of human nature an unaccountable propenfity to wavering and change; in fo much that
a cele-

a celebrated French writer has asserted, that men sometimes differ full as much from themselves, as they do from many parts of the brute creation ; in regard to the absolute truth of this assertion, I shall not take upon me to determine, but so far as it holds good, I humbly apprehend the chief reason thereof to be this, that the propensity in question is such, as the general practice of moral virtue, unsupported by a uniform and steady adherence to the christian system, is not always sufficiently able to correct.

Of this indeed the subsequent conduct of Careless was an undeniable proof ; who, after having spent several years in the most rational scenes of virtue and true happiness, that this terrestrial globe is capable of affording, fell, in a most unlucky minute, into the acquaintance of a person, whom I shall here call lord Vafer ; this nobleman wanted neither genius, fortune, nor the peculiar advantage of many personal accomplishments to render himself not only extremely agreeable, but a useful member of society ; yet was he utterly void of every moral principle, and by abusing shamefully misemployed those talents, which might otherwise have rendered him highly valuable, a blessing to his friends, and a shining ornament to his

country; but alas! he was not only a stranger, but an implacable enemy to all religion and moral rectitude; his youth had been entirely corrupted by a bad education, he had been early trained up in the prompt school of pride and folly, spoiled by flattery, and ruined by pleasure; this unseasonable freedom from all kinds of restraint first led him into many thoughtless amusements, which at last ended in the most flagrant vices.

To the wise and good it is a deplorable, though a very obvious reflection, to observe how seldom people, in an elevated sphere of life, are disposed to see, and acknowledge themselves in the wrong; a difference in circumstances may without doubt sometimes aggravate, or mitigate a crime, but this can be in a small degree only, since the avowed violation of any thing so sacred as moral obligation, indisputably renders the prince himself criminal, as well as the beggar; and, even in the commission of the very same crime, often considerably more so; because ignorance must be admitted as a juster plea, on the part of the latter, than authority and power, however uncontrouled, can be on that of the former; especially, as his example is always of such importance, that he becomes in a great measure answerable

swerable for the consequences thereof ; and indeed this rule holds proportionably through all ranks and degrees, from the highest to the lowest of mankind : amongst the great therefore, instead of their attempting, either by the false spirit of haughtiness and authority to justify, on the one hand, or by the mean spirit of subterfuge and evasion to palliate, on the other, whatever is palpably wrong, how infinitely more noble and generous would it be in them, if not to amend absolutely, at least to acknowledge ingenuously their own errors, and, by so doing, to prevent in some degree the fatal effects of their example ; I think, I may almost venture to affirm, that it would be more glorious to rise in this manner, than never to have fallen at all ; yet I would by no means be understood to recommend so dangerous an experiment to those, who are already established in the ways of virtue.

To pay a voluntary homage to truth, even when it makes against one's self, argues indeed a most heroick greatness of soul ; and yet it is supposed to be no more, in fact, than what every man who has had the advantage of a liberal education, and would be thought a gentleman, and a man of honour is indispensibly obliged to ; but more especially that part of mankind
amongst

amongst us, who pique themselves so much upon their honour, and look upon it as the very quintessence of all distinction from the vulgar ; and yet I am afraid that, had there not been a much stronger principle than all this, to enforce the obligation above-mentioned, even the small portion of virtue which now exists, would still be considerably smaller than it is ; for the whole force of honour, exclusive of this enlivening principle, is found to operate, at best, but very superficially, nay is sometimes diametrically opposite to virtue and common sense : the bare empty name of high sounding titles of honour, without the reality, and the appearance of doing things, however immoral in themselves, with a certain grace, makes but too frequently an atonement, in the opinion of the polite world, for the want both of true virtue and honour ; for besides their prevailing biases to illicit pleasures, the generality of people in high life are too apt to consider sincerity, in all who approach them, as a breach of decorum at least, if not as a downright act of presumption ; and often chuse rather to forego all the solid advantages of true friendship, and be flattered by their passions and sycophants to their own destruction,

struction, than submit to hear the genuine voice of reason and truth.

Of this class was the agreeable, but greatly vicious lord Vafer mentioned above, to whose account the fall of Careless from the paths of virtue, truth and honour, and all the tedious scene of Portia's bitter woes is wholly to be placed; the friendship of this nobleman, if it deserved to be called by so sacred a name, had something in the appearance of it that was too flattering to the vanity and ambition of Careless to be easily resisted, by a person of his complexion, whose imagination and passions had greatly the advantage of his judgment in point of strength; not that he was naturally, or habitually addicted to any predominant vice, but seemed rather, 'till this unhappy period, to entertain the justest sense of the force of all moral obligations; but alas, this alone was not sufficient; the charms of lord Vafer's conversation, together with the constant influence of so infectious an example, by degrees seduced, and at last intirely debauched and corrupted him, as had been the unhappy fate of many others before him; from this time he bid adieu to all conjugal and parental affection, and soon shook off all regard to reputation and common decency; he seemed,

seemed, in short, irrecoverably reduced to the subjection of vice, as if by the power of some extraordinary enchantment; indeed it was almost impossible for any man to escape the contagion of lord Vaffer's vicious society, when once within its reach, except he had been impreguably fortified by the principles of the gospel, which, it is but too plain, was not the case with Careless, and therefore I think, we may certainly conclude, that this was the fatal rock whereon he split: how has sorrow seized my heart whenever Portia was in this part of her story; but the more her virtues were tried in the fire of affliction, the more pure, like gold, she still emerged from thence.

C H A P. IV.

Continuation of Portia's story.

TO lose the affection of a man so entirely beloved, as was Careless, by his faithful and tender Portia, especially as the whole happiness of her life depended on its preservation, must have been a trial, only fit to exercise such virtue and fortitude as she was mistress of: I will suppose that Careless, upon his first deviation-

ation from a regular course of life, might not intend to have proceeded to such immoderate lengths of vice as he afterwards run into ; nor to have designedly inflicted so severe a weight of misery upon so amiable a woman, and so excellent a wife ; but who, except the idiot, the madman, or the knave, can presume to promise himself an exemption from the fatal consequences of associating in bad company ? the path which leads to sensual pleasure is always easy of access, and seems as if every where strewed about with flowers ; the first advances made therein may possibly, to the dissolute and thoughtless, be highly engaging and delightful ; but upon a farther progress, although the scene be changed considerably for the worse, yet a retreat from thence, like that from the lion's den, or an enemy's quarter, becomes often extremely difficult and dangerous ; nay, such is the infatuation which vice too frequently occasions, that even the point of honour is made to consist in not receding from thence.

The time had been, and it was but lately elapsed, when Careless, had he spent an hour out of the company of his beloved Portia, except when engaged by the unavoidable necessity of business, would sensibly have regretted it as a real loss ;
now

now whole days and nights were incontinently sacrificed to the commands of lord Vafer, and his profligate companions ; but this was not all ; he generally returned home, after these excursions, extremely peevish and out of humour, nay sometimes morose, ill-natured, and downright abusive ; yet, upon all such occasions, Portia received him with her accustomed complacency and gentleness of manners, for indeed to her he was always truly welcome ; and whatever pangs she might secretly feel from such cruel, such ungenerous treatment, whether from the excess of her affection for him, or from the flattering hope of melting him into tenderness by the mildness of her address ; so it was, that not the least trace of resentment, or upbraiding for such injuries, ever lowred on her brow, or appeared in any part of her behaviour ; to avoid every possible occasion of any thing like a scene of altercation, she for a considerable time made not the least enquiry into the present unhappy change in his temper and conduct, for fear that it might perhaps tend only to irritate him still the more ; she rather endeavoured, in the most affectionate manner, to sooth and win him over, if possible, to his former regularity of life, and serenity of mind, in hopes
that

that his own good sense, after some intervals of reflection upon his past errors, might successfully co-operate with these her endeavours ; but this alas was wholly without effect, he was advanced too far to be reclaimed, in so much that every engaging, every persuasive art which the strongest combination of virtue, beauty, sweetness of disposition, and good understanding could suggest, were all tried utterly in vain, the Power of all Portia's charms was now no more.

Added moreover to the misfortune of having thus irrecoverably lost her husband's affection, she was soon obliged to experience still another, and a very severe one too, though perhaps, in her estimation, it was considerably less so than the former ; I mean the deplorable conjuncture of finding that she was reduced to very narrow circumstances for the subsistence of herself and children, of whom she had now three: it has always been justly remarked, that excess in point of expence, and that usually beyond the person's ability who is guilty of it, is the inseparable attendant on a vicious course of life, and sometimes proves likewise one temporal punishment thereof ; the extravagance of Careless afforded a memorable instance to this effect ; so long as he continued in a course

course of sobriety and virtue, his fortune, his reputation, and his happiness, even by his own confession, greatly prospered ; but so soon as he had actually strayed from thence, a dreadful reverse in each of these began visibly to succeed ; and such a consequence indeed was very naturally to be expected, notwithstanding that the intoxication of vice and riotous pleasures may for a while obstruct and divert the apprehension thereof ; from hence it was, that the shameful neglect he was guilty of in the execution of those employments which he held under the government, soon occasioned his dismissal from thence ; nor could all the interest of his fast friend lord Vaser ever procure his re-establishment therein ; one of the main springs therefore for the supply of his extravagance being thus cut off, after he had consumed the whole of what Portia's frugality had prudently saved, he soon mortgaged his estate for as much as he could possibly borrow upon it, which however, as he still seemed determined not to retrench in the free indulgence of his pleasures, lasted but a little while.

Before the commencement of his acquaintance with the noble peer so often mentioned, notwithstanding that he yearly laid up money, he lived in a very genteel manner,

manner, his table, his furniture and equipage had, all of them, the appearance of affluence and taste ; and this indeed might very well be, for his income, as I have before observed, was large ; but his disbursements on the score of illicit pleasures were from that unlucky period still considerably more so ; every thing, in short, wherein prudence should have had the direction, began now to take a retrograde course, which by swift degrees rendered him most ungratefully sordid and penurious, where he ought to have been the most generous and kind.

In the practice of decent oeconomy, few women, I believe, ever arrived at Portia's excellence ; none, I will be confident to affirm, ever exceeded her ; her chief motive thereto was good, for it was that of charity joined with prudence, by no means that of avarice, and her judgment was in every respect equal to so good a motive ; but as she had not for so many years the least reason to apprehend that so dreadful a vicissitude, as was in fact now going to take place, would ever fall to her lot, she was, just at the instant of its arrival, the more incapable of guarding against it, and had accordingly made no sort of provision for the consequences thereof ; for she would have es-

teemed it as a high breach of trust, to have secretly reserved to herself even so much as the prudence of her own frugality, after such deductions were made from thence, as she thought reasonably necessary for the service of the poor ; she therefore, at the end of each year, regularly presented the surplus to her husband, and in so doing persuaded herself, that she did nothing more than what her duty strictly enjoined, very justly supposing that such savings, properly managed, might in time help to increase the provision to be made for younger children ; but in her present distressful situation, when a supply for even the common necessities of life began to be grudgingly dealt out, if not wholly denied, she had indeed but very little opportunity to exert her talents in the art of oeconomy and good management.

All this, however grievous, she patiently bore without the least complaint ; but she now began to feel another affliction, which, to her, was much more severe than any I have as yet mentioned ; and yet it was no more than what might have been very consistently expected, from the loose kind of life which Careless had for some time led ; but as she had never discovered in him the least propensity, but rather a particular aversion, to the destruc-

destructive practice of intemperate drinking, she consequently suspected not, 'till it became too notorious even for her fond incredulity, that he could ever be thus unhappily seduced : it helped indeed, in some measure, to account for the otherwise amazing irregularity which he, who before had always been remarkably prudent and sober, was now fallen into ; and who that is once irrevocably inflamed to this almost worst of all vices (since it is in a great measure an inlet to all others) can presume to answer for what may happen ; at least till the consciousness of his having committed crimes of the deepest hue, shall perhaps arrest him in some of his cooler moments of reflection.

'Tis indeed a very mistaken kind of casuistry to suppose, because a premeditated intention to act wrong may, possibly, have no immediate share in the profligate frolicks of a drunkard, that therefore he is not guilty ; the very laws of the land have made it otherwise, and in this particular they are founded on superior laws, on laws of immutable rectitude ; suppose, a man, who is in possession of the full use of his reason, should wantonly take an over dose of opium, in order to elude the more effectually for a time, what he may possibly think the
1
painful

painful impertinence of reflection, and by this rash act fall the victim of his own criminal indiscretion ; I say, whatever the fate of such a person may be in the next world, though I presume not even to imagine, yet certain I am, that in this, were our laws always to have their free course, he must indisputably be treated as a suicide ; how much less rigorously, pray then, before the period of dissolution, should the professed drunkard and debauchee be treated ? who, after having absolutely renounced the use of reason, proceeds undauntedly to the destruction of his health, fame, life, and often to that of his family's whole support ; for if our intentions are at all to be regarded in our actions, as they most certainly are, the guilt of him, who acts wrong by voluntarily divesting himself of the power of all intention to act right, is confessedly equal with that of him who acts intentionally wrong.

And this indeed was the unhappy case of Careless, who, whenever he happened to be invited by the example of his superiors, or fired by the false spirit of Burgundy and Champaign, was guilty of many enormities, that passed off for the time only as scenes of wit and humour, the very thoughts of which he would however shudder

er at when sober; yet wanted reso-
 to extricate himself from the vile
 of those, who daily involved him
 in labyrinths of wickedness and folly;
 particularly from that of the aban-
 peer already mentioned; whose for-
 being considerable, together with
 nk, was, no doubt, an extraordi-
 nary encouragement, as it was likewise
 but always a sufficient security to in-
 fect the whole company for whatever
 crimes they might commit, excepting
 that of murder, which they had the
 fortune to avoid, and perhaps the
 instance of false heroism they left
 unviewed.

Portia's most poignant affliction
 from the visible havock, which she
 saw to be daily making in the health
 of her father, by his continued scenes of de-
 bauchery; and therefore, in a matter of
 great importance to her, as she presumed,
 it was by no means inconsistent with
 the strictest obligations of her duty, she
 forthwith attempted, but in the softest and
 pathetic terms imaginable, to ex-
 plain a little with him, and to con-
 vince him, if yet it was possible, that the
 probable destruction, as well of soul
 as of reputation and fortune,
 inevitably be the consequence of per-

severing in the riotous course of life, wherein he had been for some time past engaged; that however indispensable, on her part, an earlier remonstancé of this kind may seem to have been, she had nevertheless carefully forborn making such, from the hopes that, as heaven had blessed him with a superior understanding, he would, long before this time, have discovered and corrected the fatal errors of his conduct; that in regard to herself, neither her affection nor her duty would ever suffer her to think amiss of him, much less to upbraid or accuse him, on account of any injuries which she had either already sustained, or might hereafter from his unkindness; that to whatever pittance he might be pleased to reduce her and his children, she doubted not of the gracious and constant protection of providence towards herself and them; nor had she now presumed to have offered even thus much, had not her extreme tenderness for him, particularly in the present ruinous situation of his health, extorted it from her.

Careless, it must be owned, gave her upon this occasion a very patient and attentive hearing, insomuch that she was inclined to believe, her sufferings, and the delicacy with which she had concealed them from the world, had at last touched his

his heart; but alas! the case was far otherwise; his patience proceeded rather from a thorough contempt of her, and every thing else that was good, than from any thing like remorse, or an inclination to amendment; for he had long given up the reins to passion and appetite too freely to admit of any check or restraint; reason and judgment were not merely laid asleep, but totally dismissed from all farther attendance upon him, so that, in truth, Portia had not at present the least foundation left even for hope, save only that imaginary one, which the unabated tenderness of her affection for a most ungrateful husband still suggested to her; and with this, forlorn as it was, she continued to flatter herself that he might yet be reclaimed; but not the least hint of his unkind behaviour ever once escaped her lips; her sufferings, though highly grievous, she kept intirely within her own breast; she thought it a subject too sacred to be communicated even to a mother's ear; and that it ill became a wife to be the accuser of her own husband.

It must be acknowledged indeed, that she had, all this while, the heart-felt consolation of knowing her own innocence, and that her conscience, upon the strictest scrutiny she could possibly make into her conduct, had fairly acquitted her of hav-

ing deserved even the smallest part of all the rigorous treatment she had met with; so that, had not her affection been thus inseparably rivetted to her husband, she might have appeared, in one light, rather as the object of envy than compassion: she was indeed altogether ignorant of those consolatory principles of stoicism, which are very successfully cultivated by some modern wives, who, much to the honour both of their invention and resolution, have, at all times, their affections so absolutely at command, that, although their husbands be, in disposition and conduct, directly the reverse of Careless, they nevertheless can, and frequently do, with wonderful facility and composure, transfer the same from them, perhaps to a monkey, a masquerade, a new love, a party at cards, a cordial julep, or some such infallible restorative of happiness; and this is that sublime fortitude, which so deservedly engages the attention and admiration of most of our modern female stoicks; who must, it seems, be actually in the state of wedlock, as an indispensable qualification for their degree, before they can be admitted into this sect; as it is presumed, that otherwise they could not have had an opportunity of acquiring sufficient experience to distinguish themselves, and dis-

display their abilities to the best advantage.

It is the peculiar office of this same stoical doctrine to inculcate to its professors, that their supreme happiness is to depend only on themselves, and that the measure and degree thereof can alone be determined by the secret feelings of their own fair bosoms; accordingly, if all be well there, they are to think it utterly inconsistent with their principles, ever to be moved by any thing from without, or to suffer the course of their felicity to be disturbed by any thing so trifling as conjugal or parental affections; so that although they may possibly love their husbands, and that to no small degree, they yet can very philosophically sacrifice that passion at will, and become instantly above every sensation of anxiety or pain, that can arise from their resentment, indignation, or ill usage: hence every object that excites terror, compassion, or any other disagreeable emotion in their tender breasts, is absolutely to be rejected as foreign to their system; and on the contrary, every object that is capable of communicating pleasure, which is their chief good, is as easily adopted into it: their happiness, therefore, being thus wrapped up wholly in themselves, the opinion of the world

is no otherwise regarded by them, than merely as it happens to coincide with their own; they think, in fact, exactly with the philosopher, that the titles and distinctions of life, together with the opinion of the world, are altogether superficial, no more than the mere scenes of a drama, calculated to amuse a mixed multitude; and consequently that none can strictly be allowed to act their parts well, however they may perhaps be applauded by the audience for so doing, if their performance tends, in any degree, to violate that supreme bliss, of which themselves must always be admitted as the properest judges, as they can only be supposed to feel it.

That this however was a species of fortitude and female heroism, of which Portia had not the least idea, will, I believe, very sufficiently appear in the following part of her story.

C H A P. V.

Continuation of Portia's story to the death of Careless, with some occasional reflections.

IT has been remarked from time immemorial, and I think not unjustly, that good fortune, from the flattering expectation of its producing certain happiness, has

has in all ages been the supreme goddess, to whom the generality of mankind have chiefly paid their adorations; I am therefore the more apprehensive that my opinion may, on that account, appear somewhat singular, when I assert, that it is adversity alone, if borne with propriety and true magnanimity, which places the grandeur of the human soul in it's most distinguished point of light, and renders the real merit of mankind truly conspicuous, while prosperity tends for the most part but to darken and obscure it's lustre: this, like a false witness, dealing much in misrepresentation and deception, endeavours gradually to invert the natural constitution and settled order of things, and too frequently succeeds in throwing a spurious glory round the sheltered vice and real meanness of many of it's votaries.

From hence it is that I deduce the opinion above-mentioned, an opinion founded upon long observation, and some share of experience, and therefore I cannot help concluding, that prosperity, especially when abused, which is but too often the case, darts forth stings, that are in fact infinitely sharper than those of adversity, and such as put the soul to a much severer and more fatal trial; for prosperity,

by attacking the mind secretly, and as it were by almost imperceptible degrees, disarms it effectually of all it's native and auxiliary force, infuses into it a poison by so much the more dangerous, as it is always the more subtle, and leaves it thus an easy prey to the violence of it's own passions: few people, indeed, whom I have ever had the honour of knowing, how deservedly soever they may be applauded for other kinds of merit, have yet had heads sufficiently strong, and hearts at the same time sufficiently humble and humane, to manage prosperity as they ought; few of whom, it may be justly said, they bore their dignity with so much meekness: whereas, in truth, adversity acts the part of a most sincere and faithful friend, it's intention in the very infliction of pain being to administer comfort; at least, if ever it be a real foe, it is an open and a generous one; if it punishes vice and folly, 'tis only because they are the avowed enemies of virtue and wisdom, and consequently enemies to the true happiness of mankind; or if it sometimes tries even that virtue itself, 'tis but in order to make it triumph still the more: in short, like an honest and a skilful physician, it ingenuously declares the true state of the mind's disorder, and prescribes at the same

same time an infallible remedy for it, except the patient's obstinacy defeats the cure, and deservedly enhances thereby his own misery.

It was however to a disposition, in every respect the reverse of this latter, adorned with conscious innocence, with resignation, humility, and meekness; but above all, with the great instructive truths of religion, which so emphatically inculcate these virtues; to this, I say, it was, that Portia was principally indebted for whatever consolation she received under the severe pressure of her present injuries, which were indeed almost intolerable, but then by patiently submitting to the inflicting hand of heaven she secured in the main such real advantages, as, without doubt, are always intended to be produced from thence, yet such as can only fall to the lot of the truly humble spirit.

One unhappy effect indeed of her affliction, how heroically soever she bore it otherwise, was, that by it's preying most severely upon her health and spirits, it became involuntarily too apparent in her countenance to be longer concealed from her friends; this the affectionate Lucia had for some time beheld with much concern, and had occasionally hinted it to her daughter, who, to avoid all further ex-

planation upon the subject, generally chose to turn the discourse, and assured her mother, that she was perfectly well ; but Lucia, observing that her malady, whatever it was, began of late to increase still faster, was now filled with the most alarming apprehensions, that her daughter was falling into an incurable consumption ; and though I believe no human creature ever adored truth more sincerely than Portia did, yet rather than Careless, with all his faults, should suffer in the opinion of her friends, she scrupled not, for the present, to let the above deception pass upon them.

To those, who estimate the strength and value of the human understanding, only in proportion to the success of it's interested views, this must certainly appear as an unpardonable weakness in Portia ; but without attempting to account for it by the peculiar softness of her disposition, the tenderness of her heart, or her unalterable affection for her husband, I shall beg leave to assure them that she was gifted, not only with sagacity and judgment, but with a strength of resolution, far beyond any other of her sex whom I ever was acquainted with ; the truth of which assertion was abundantly confirmed by the severity of her sufferings, and particularly

ticularly by her manner of bearing them. The unkind, nay, base behaviour of Careless towards her would, no doubt, in the opinion of the world, have justified a very different conduct on her part; but she regulated not the sentiments of her heart, nor the dictates of her conscience, by the fashionable, or prevailing opinion of the world in such cases; she had recourse to a superior direction; 'tis true, the only person from whom her wrongs proceeded was, to his unspeakable infamy and guilt, her husband; he was, moreover, the man whom she tenderly and sincerely loved; he treated her with the utmost ingratitude and inhumanity, which, by degrees, necessarily must, and doubtless did, abate the ardor of her affection; but she still considered him as her husband, and the father of her children, against whom the law of retaliation, in this case, or the practice of any kind of revenge, notwithstanding the numberless precedents exhibited by the polite world on such occasions, was by no means to be executed; the tenets of her system, however obsolete at present they may seem, did utterly forbid it.

She wanted not indeed that quickness and sensibility, in regard to the wrongs she sustained, which so instantly impel the injured to seek redress; and this it was

that gave the keenest edge, and a redoubled force to all her afflictions ; but then the solemn vows she plighted at the altar were, in her opinion, too sacred to admit of any relaxation ; the more injurious the cruelty of Careless appeared to her, and the more criminal his infidelity, the less surely must it have afforded, to a person of her disposition and rectitude of principle, an example that was by any means proper for her imitation ; and therefore she could not help looking upon every overture of redress, that was to be obtained at the shocking price of publishing her husband's dishonour, as an actual violation, in some degree of those her nuptial vows, and which, instead of administering any relief to her, would certainly have proved a high aggravation of her sufferings ; so that in this deplorable situation, patience, submission, and the conscious approbation of her own heart, made up the whole of her resource.

But though she concealed all this as carefully as possible from every body, and particularly from her own family, it cannot reasonably be supposed, that her brother, who lived constantly in London, could be an entire stranger to it, nor was he, for he had, it seems, been faithfully and minutely informed, though not a great

great while before, of all the profligate proceedings of Careless, yet, for fear of shortening, by the cruel recital, even the small remaining period of a fond mother's life, who was now very far advanced in years, he purposely suppressed it for a while, and particularly, as he was not altogether without hopes, that the advice and remonstrances of friends might at length recover this man to a sense of justice, of virtue, and of honour ; but alas, the certainty of some accounts which he had lately heard had now entirely removed every expectation of that kind ; for Careless, when he had riotously consumed, amidst the most dissolute and abandoned of both sexes, all the money he could possibly raise on his estate, or borrow from his friends, was under a necessity, as his last resource, of throwing himself wholly upon lord Vafer's protection, whose behaviour, on this occasion, was indeed a faithful representation of the common friendship of the great, to such at least of their companions in iniquity, as happen not to be upon a level with them in point of fortune, for except in this last particular, and that of being most transcendently vicious, Careless, it must be allowed, was in every other respect greatly lord Vafer's superior.

But

But friendship of this kind, founded for the most part merely in vice, and a mutual concurrence in libertine principles, as it can only be supported by the power of indulging these, so must it always cease with the extinction of that power ; and so indeed it happened here, for when his lordship found himself thus likely to be saddled with the incumbrance of an impoverished friend, a friend too, reduced at this time both to beggary and infamy, and that in a manner wholly by his lordship's influence and example, he soon devised the most effectual means to get rid of him at the smallest expence to himself which he possibly could ; and this he accomplished, by exerting his interest to procure him some small commission in one of the English regiments which were then abroad ; for even this monster, by the mere credit of a large estate, still preserved an interest with the higher powers, and what is yet more extraordinary, had the modesty to receive, as of right, that deference and respect, which is only due to virtuous and honourable characters.

But the distressful condition of Careless, and his affairs at this time, no more than lord Vafer's great generosity in taking advantage thereof, would decently admit of any expostulation upon the merit

rit of this singular instance of his lordship's friendship ; there was, in short, no other alternative, either Careless must now thankfully comply with this generous proposal of his lordship, or never more presume to see his face : a stroke so unexpected as this, filled Careless with the utmost astonishment ; but it instantly laid open to his view, though for the first time, the whole fund of baseness and vice that occupied lord Vafer's heart, as likewise the egregious folly and enormity of his own conduct ; and thoroughly convinced him, though now alas too late, of the unpardonable vanity of aspiring at the friendship or society of our superiors, except when we have the strongest proofs that the basis thereof is absolutely laid in virtue : he however had at present but very little time allowed him for reflection, and therefore without farther hesitation accepted his lordship's offer ; but then it was, in fact, more from a sudden start of desperation than choice, being covered over with confusion and indignation against the man who had first seduced him from the happy paths of virtue and honour, to those of infamy and ruin ; and not only so, but had reduced him likewise from a state of opulence, to the sad necessity of being now
meanly

meanly obliged to him for a poor subsistence.

And yet his indignation was still more keenly pointed against himself, when he considered how irreparably he was become the dupe of his own folly : to have called lord Vaser to account, in an honourable way, as the phrase is, which Careless, who by no means wanted spirit, was by a violent transport of passion prompted to do, would indeed have been a most unpardonable aggravation of his other crimes; though ridding the world of such a wretch might probably have proved an advantage to many people, but some few, who were yet his real friends, dissuaded him wholly from such a rash attempt : as soon therefore as he had received his commission from the bounteous hand of his noble patron, he declared that he would instantly set out for the army, and bid adieu to England, perhaps for ever, as indeed it afterwards proved ; he accordingly sent to his house for whatever cloaths or other necessaries might be wanting in this expedition, but without giving his wife the least hint of his intentions ; deterred, no doubt, by the cowardice of a guilty conscience, from appearing before that virtuous, that affectionate wife, and those innocent children, whom he had so cruelly

cruelly injured: and happy it was for Portia, that an interview did not take place, which, considering the present miserable dejection of her spirits, must in all probability have been fatal to her; so that she remained for some time wholly ignorant in regard to this last resolution of his, it having been lately no uncommon practice with him to be absent from his family for several weeks together, without ever vouchsafing to communicate the least account of himself, and therefore his absence at present seemed to have nothing in it that was extraordinary enough to alarm Portia's fears; who, by his continued ill treatment of her, and utter neglect of his children, as likewise by the pressing remonstrances of her brother, was now endeavouring, as much as she possibly could, to divest herself of all remains of tenderness for a man so entirely unworthy of it.

Tradewell, whose great affection for his sister had long made him extremely anxious for the re-establishment of her happiness and peace, and consequently extremely watchful of her husband's conduct, had soon learned a particular account of his departure from England, together with the occasion and extraordinary manner thereof, but judged it highly improper,
at

at the time, to give her any information of it ; as he well knew that it would prove a source of lasting anguish to her ; for a considerable time therefore he prudently suppressed the most disagreeable circumstances of that transaction, nor was she acquainted therewith, till many years after the decease of Careless ; who, notwithstanding the solemn promises he had made to some of his friends, that he would instantly leave England, upon their assisting him with a present supply of cash for that purpose, seemed nevertheless still inclined to loiter here, with a view only to indulge in the same sad round of criminal excesses, which from habit were now become irresistible to him ; as if he had been resolutely bent upon his own destruction ; but a positive order from the war-office, requiring all absent officers, upon pain of being cashiered, to repair immediately to their respective regiments, hastened on his departure much sooner than he either wished or intended ; yet such was his infatuation, so irrecoverable an ascendant had vice now gained over him, that of those abandoned creatures, who scarcely deserve the name of women, and who, it must be observed, had a considerable share in the accomplishment of his ruin here, of these, I say, he selected some of the very worst, to accompany

pany him in his expedition, in order to soften the fatigues and toils of his campaign ; where, in the continued pursuit of disease and infamy, rather than of glory and preferment, I shall leave him for a while, and, in consequence of this his final separation from his wife and native country, as it happened, give my readers what farther related to her.

The amiable, but highly injured Portia, though she had at first flattered herself with the pleasing hopes of Careless's reformation, was, nevertheless, for some time past, strongly induced to apprehend, from his sad and obstinate perseverance in vice, that no such prosperous event was now ever likely to take place ; and in this her shocking apprehension how fatally alas was she confirmed, when informed by her brother of his actual departure from England, and likewise of the dreadful situation to which he had abandoned both her and his children ; without the least provision being made for their present subsistence, or indeed for their future, in case of his death, more than the scanty one of her small jointure : his estate, which was afterwards found to have been mortgaged over and over to different persons for considerably more than it was worth, had long been in the possession of creditors, so that nothing was

was to be expected from thence ; and, what was still worse than this, Portia's marriage settlement, which, from the beginning thro' a most fatal mistake, was suffered to remain in the hands of one of his creatures, as trustee, who died about this time, full as insolvent as his friend ; this, I suppose, Careless had obtained from him, and either gave it up to some of his creditors, as a still stronger security for their demands, or else he absolutely destroyed it ; for it was now no where to be found, which would inevitably render even that small income greatly precarious after his decease, as in fact it accordingly did ; for in a few months after his departure from England, there came a certain account of his death, that soon brought this whole matter to light.

His death happened not indeed to be in the bed of honour, as might have been wished by his Friends, although it must be allowed, that cowardice was not to be reckoned amongst the number of his faults ; but the truth is, he had, as yet, met with no opportunity of distinguishing his courage, there having been no engagement with the enemy since he had joined the army : in short, this poor unhappy man died an inflexible martyr to that intemperance, from which no consideration what-
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ever, no connections of the dearest, the tenderest Kind, had Power to reclaim him ; his health, through repeated excesses, was greatly impaired when he left England, which, I suppose, his usual manner of living in a camp did not tend much to rectify.

But it now became absolutely necessary to acquaint Portia with this event, who received the account of it with that settled melancholy and resignation, which a long successive train of afflictions had habitually inured her to ; tho' few wives, I believe, particularly of her merit, had ever been more severely injured than herself, yet was she never once known to utter the least reviling or vindictive exclamation against Careless, either before or after his death ; 'tis contrary indeed to every suggestion, both of reason and of love, to suppose, that this last incident, melancholy as it may seem, could now prove any extraordinary aggravation of her misery ; his long continued, relentless inhumanity to her effectually prevented it ; but still it served to redouble, if possible, the tenderness of her compassion and affection for his guiltless children.

However, in a few months after her husband's decease, upon application for the payment of her jointure, as she could
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not produce the deed of settlement by which it was secured, her title to it was strongly disputed; but not to enter into a particular detail of that troublesome affair, after a fruitless and perplexing scene of litigation, she was by the ingenious letter of the law most equitably deprived of the whole: but alas, this was not all, for, as if it had been intended to reduce this highly injured woman, and her helpless little family to the last extremity of distress, a number of unappeasable creditors, who had no other probable expedient for the recovery of their just demands, most mercilessly fell upon the little personal estate which still remained, and, in order to fill up the measure of her misfortunes, tore away from her all the plate and furniture of her house, all her personal ornaments and moveables, and in short every thing else that belonged to her, excepting literally the cloaths that were on her back.

Upon this truly deplorable occasion, as it generally happens in such cases, she was instantly deserted by that whole motley tribe, who are wont, for a certain period, to assume the title of friends, but whom I call only fashionable intruders; for friends, according to the true import of that sacred character, they never could have been,
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notwithstanding all the ardour of their former professions; mere summer-flies, that teize and stun you with impertinence and noise, but vanish at the first approach of winter: for in the gay season of Portia's prosperity, which to the world's appearance was but just elapsed, although she had been universally esteemed as a pattern of merit to her own sex, and an object every way worthy of admiration by the other, insomuch, that in the female world, in order to rise to such a degree of fame, as might justly claim the approbation of the virtuous and the wise, it needed only to be known, that the candidate was honoured with Portia's friendship; yet so it fell out, that like the bloom of a short-lived flower, herevery excellence seemed at once to vanish and decay: it fares sometimes with friendship, as it sometimes doth with love, for friends as well as lovers are known to be capricious and inconstant; nor will it, I believe, be denied, that misfortune, how inevitably soever it may have happened, as often proves the fatal enemy of virtue and merit, as age or the small pox can be of beauty.

If the breast of a sincere friend would have been keenly affected, as no doubt it would, on beholding the once amiable Portia

Portia thus ready to sink beneath the weight of such unmerited calamities, how consummately base and mean must have been the souls of those pretended friends, surrounded, as many of them were, with the full tide of affluence and honours, who oft had boasted of deriving happiness from her, and yet could view the present shocking scene without a sigh, much less without any of those finer feelings of the uncorrupted heart, which sympathy always so strongly suggests in favour of the wretched ; but alas, what are the difficulties and misfortunes of the virtuous to those who are hackneyed down in all the ways of luxury and pleasure ; whose minds, from a long habitual aversion to pain of every kind, but particularly to that of pitying the distressed, are become quite callous and insensible to all the tender callings of humanity : a state of plenitude, like this, 'tis true, can leave them very little to wish, but then it leaves them much to fear, so much, that even grandeur itself, I doubt, doth sometimes lose its charms ; tired with the same reiterated round of pomp, of pageantry, and pleasure, the jaded spirits flag, the senses by satiety lose all the quickness of their functions, the mind remains unblest, and even time is condemned for
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having nothing new to offer: if they happen upon any occasion, to look into their own breasts, they soon discover there a horrid void, an utter destitution of every real joy, because they meet with nothing that can bear reflection; yet still reflection will intrude, in spite of all their efforts to prevent it, and, like the ghost of some departed, highly injured friend, will haunt and terrify them through all the calmer moments of recess; this by degrees soon pall the high-felt relish for enjoyment; imbitters every potion of delight, and makes the world appear to them a joyless and detested scene; hence oft the sad precipitate retreat from life; all sense of virtue and religion being once effaced, pride and false heroism with greater confidence suggest the friendly pistol, or the laudanum, as the last, and only decent relief in such a case, to which a man of spirit should ever deign to have recourse.

But it is time that I should leave moralizing, at least upon so dreadful a subject, and return to the afflicted Portia; to whom, as she hath since often assured me, religion afforded the only real comfort and support that she was capable of feeling, under the complicated variety of woes with which she was oppressed: what I have hitherto given of her story, I affirm to be

strictly true; but there are many more circumstances yet behind, which would exhibit such amazing instances of distress, and at the same time such amazing instances of fortitude in surmounting them, as would raise her character still considerably higher; but the fear of giving offence to some persons who are now alive, lays me under a necessity of suppressing this part, however advantageous the recital might have been to her: the only farther remark, which, for the reason just assigned, I shall presume to make upon the conduct of Careless, is, that it ought to be the first and constant point of ambition, nay the inseparable characteristick of every man, who is well born and well educated, to distinguish himself as much as possible from the illiterate vulgar, in every article of his behaviour; and always to remember that the pleasures of sense, how allowable soever they may seem by nature, are still to be considered restrictively as the pleasures of a gentleman, a rational creature, and a christian.

It was indeed a peculiar blessing for Portia, that, through all the different parts of her education, the unerring and truly consoling principles of the gospel, in all their genuine purity, had so successfully been blended with the less important,

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though necessary accomplishments of her person, that while her understanding was by degrees ripening into maturity, her conviction, her faith, and her obedience, were at the same time becoming inflexibly established: she therefore, in her present unhappy circumstances, punctually practised, as she had learned from thence, an unreserved submission to the divine will in all its various dispensations; she even practised, with success, the hardest lesson to be learned in this life, the pardoning of injuries unprovoked, and the subduing her own passions: the great advantage of patience in affliction, but particularly the consideration of its being her duty, soon reconciled the difficulty of her submission; and however painful in the operation this may be, it nevertheless effectually calmed that disquietude and perturbation of her mind, which otherwise might have proved intolerable; by perseverance it gradually softened all the seeming rigour of her fate, and communicated, at least, such an inward tranquility and composure, as the world, with all its charms, was incapable of affording her: it may, in short, be affirmed with truth, that the school of virtue and religion had so thoroughly prepared her for the discipline of affliction, that all the violence of the latter, without essentially

injuring her, had only given her an opportunity of doing still greater honour to the former.

In this school it was, that she acquired the whole compass of that cosmetic art, which, from the success of her example, I would endeavour to recommend to the practice of my fair country-women; though I would, at the same time, by no means, be understood to insinuate, that it can only be obtained at the severe expence of suffering the same misfortunes which fell to her lot; such a condition, if absolutely inseparable from thence, would indeed be truly discouraging and frightful; but that is altogether uncertain, and merely accidental; yet, amidst the various, but complicated distributions of good and evil, with which infinite wisdom sees fit to exercise his rational creatures, if what we call misfortune be appointed as our portion, as the particular species of our trial here, it is surely no inconsiderable advantage to be able to acquit ourselves with that propriety, that decency of merit, which becomes the rank we hold amongst intelligent beings.

It is however the peculiar efficacy of the art I am now recommending, not only to communicate and heighten beauty, but likewise to alleviate all the wayward miseries of life, and to sweeten, in a high
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degree, the utmost bitterness of affliction : in favour therefore of an art, (if it deserves not a better name) that on so many accounts is extremely desirable in itself, I do most earnestly address my fair readers, on whose inauspicious frown, or bliss-creating smile, depends the fate of every fine gentleman in Britain; let their all-powerful influence then, as most undoubtedly it may, be strenuously exerted to rescue the profligate lover from his apostacy; let this but once be made the invariable condition of his success, and the triumph of love and beauty will soon become conducive to the interests of religion and virtue; this is the happy art of charming in the truest sense.

* So have I seen some lovely nymph draw
nigh,

Peace in her air, persuasion in her eye;

Victorious tenderness, it all o'ercame;

Husbands look'd mild, and savages grew
tame.

It is only vice invincible that stupidly
resists the power of this persuasive art,
and

† What is vice? mere want of compass
in our thought;

Religion what? the proof of common sense.

* Dr. Young's Univ. Pass.
Night-Thoughts.

† Dr. Young's

C H A P. VI.

Continuation of Portia's story, with some farther account of Machaon.

AMIDST the multitude of Portia's calamities, the reduction of her fortune, though a circumstance in itself extremely severe, was however by no means the most afflictive of those that she felt; the cruel disappointment she had met with in the man she tenderly loved, and whom, with the joint approbation of all her friends, she had chosen preferably to all others, was infinitely more so; the total destruction of that plan of rational felicity which she had so fondly proposed to herself, and which indeed, from the flattering experience of some few years, she had the strongest presumption to believe was neither imaginary nor impracticable, proved now a subject of reflection pregnant with misery and anguish : alas ! what a falling off was here ! and yet, the consideration of Careless's incorrigible propensity to debauchery and vice of almost every kind, the sad conclusion of his mis-spent life, without the least symptom of remorse, as it enforced, beyond all other circumstances, the dreadful cause, so did it enhance the degree of her affliction, and rendered her
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in a manner utterly incapable of relishing again the happiness of this life, supposing even that the means thereof had still been in her power.

The welfare of her children indeed was now the only object that seemed to be of consequence enough to fix her attention any longer here; for, this circumstance abstracted, the world and all its vain allurements, to her, were rather painful than agreeable, and so far from affording any thing like an adequate compensation for the injuries she had sustained, and the happiness she had lost, that, at present, her inclination and taste for the enjoyment of the latter were greatly indisposed, if not totally destroyed by the unabated rigor of the former: in regard therefore merely to herself, the same sad series of unhappy events, that had so cruelly deprived her even of hope (the last endearing friend that ever deserts us in the hour of adversity) had in a great measure likewise, as if by a kind of melancholy stupefaction, delivered her at present from all the poignant agonies of suspense and fear; for she had been so thoroughly inured to the discipline of affliction, that future evils now lost all the power of alarming her apprehension before they arrived, or indeed of terrifying and dismaying her whenever they did:

misfortune, in short, seemed to have discharged against her some of the sharpest arrows in its whole quiver, and the bitterness of what she had experienced did easily incline her to believe, the worst that in all probability could befall her was already past, and to imagine that worldly happiness, unfitted as she was for its enjoyment, had now nothing better to bestow on her, than a mere dead calm of indifference, at best a kind of stupid freedom from bodily pain, a state of rest insipid.

In so wretched a situation as the present, the only prospect of immediate relief that she could hope for in this world was from the friendship of her brother Charles Tradewell, for by all others she was utterly deserted; and, to do him no more than strict justice, I cannot but acknowledge, that it was exerted in a manner that did the highest honour to his virtue; with all that anxious tenderness and assiduity which the piety of an affectionate brother, and the sensibility of a heart replete with benevolence, can never fail to suggest: indeed throughout the whole course of her severest sufferings he never deserted her; and had it not been for his unwearied offices of kindness and pecuniary assistance, the delicacy of her tender frame must soon have inevitably sunk beneath the pressure of those very suffer-

sufferings, in spight of all the strongest efforts of a mind collected within itself, and armed with such a degree of constancy and fortitude as very few of her own sex, I believe, have ever exceeded: but with whatever trials providence was at any time pleased to exercise her, such was her submissive confidence and unalterable perseverance in the paths of virtue, that although she was humbled and greatly afflicted, yet was she never once abandoned to murmuring or despair.

However, in the house of this truly affectionate brother she at length found a peaceful asylum and safe protection from all outrages, which either the malice, ingratitude, or iniquity of mankind could farther intend or execute against her; as likewise a comfortable reception for her helpless injured offspring: her brother Tradewell, very happily for her, continued still unmarried, and the venerable Lucia was at this time so far advanced in age, and its attendant infirmities, as to be incapable of coming out of her chamber, so that the true state of Portia's misfortunes, an account whereof would in all likelihood have proved fatal to her mother, was by this means the more easily concealed from her knowledge.

It must be remarked, to the distinction of Tradewell's character, that the far greatest part of his felicity consisted in succouring the distressed; which, in a state of opulence, like his, I do presume, would be much more generally the case, than what we observe it is, did the mind's first bias in favour of virtue continue still unwarped and unseduced by the powers of avarice, ambition, and other wayward passions; and yet, I apprehend, it can only be by the influence and exercise of such a disposition, that we are to understand the full scope and true import of the following beautiful Aphorism of Mr. *Pope*;

Thus God and nature linked the general
frame,

And bade self-love and social be the same.

for most undoubtedly the pleasure of giving comfort to the needy and oppressed, of lighting up the countenance of the afflicted into smiles of joy and gladness, though it be a pleasure only to the benevolent few, unknown to the generality of mankind, and consequently must seem an act so strangely disinterested, as to be without the least prospect of any return, is nevertheless, according to this rule, and in fact, the very quintessence and luxury of self-love; nor does the overgrown capital
of

of the usurer more infallibly produce an accumulation of interest at certain stated periods, than this virtue of the charitable man does a manifold increase of happiness upon every serious moment of reflection.

Tradewell, it must be owned, had in his widowed sister and her children the most favourable opportunity that could possibly offer for exercising the benevolence of his heart; and it must at the same time be acknowledged that he as readily embraced it; nor did he ever secretly repine, from an apprehension that his fortune was by such an incumbrance the more liable to be injured or impaired; for, in regard to the true end of riches, he was used to reason much in the same manner as is described in the following lines of doctor Young, and always to act in strict conformity to such reasoning:

* Fortune is famous for her numbers slain,
The number small which happiness can
bear;
Though various for a while their fates,
at last
One curse involves them all; at death's
approach
All read their riches backward into loss,
And mourn in just proportion to their store.

* *Young's Night-Thoughts*

It may indeed with great truth be said of Tradewell, that when the eye saw him, it blessed him, and when the ear heard him, it gave testimony unto him, he followed the wise man's advice, by giving to the poor he lent unto the Lord, and no more doubted the security, than I do the certainty of his receiving millions in return for his mite so lent: he was indeed a guardian angel to the wretched Portia, or rather the beneficent instrument, in the hand of providence, to save her, after so many repeated trials of her virtue, from the last extremity of distress.

Amongst the many virtues that adorned the life of this truly amiable woman, I must do her the justice to affirm, that gratitude was by no means wanting; indeed her true character is best delineated by conceiving a strong assemblage of all the virtues centering in her, and operating with an influence to be compared to nothing more appositely than to the scattered rays of the sun collected into a focus; if any shone forth more conspicuously than the rest, charity, humility, and justice, were always sure to be distinguished; yet gratitude, as I have just observed, was never wanting, and could her's have possibly been greater than what it was, I believe she would still have thought it much too small for the present occasion.

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There is no doubt to be made, that on a good mind, the sense of benefits received will always make a deep and lasting impression; from whence many people are precipitately led to infer, that every specious appearance of gratitude is a certain indication of such a disposition; and yet I have often, from close observation, been almost persuaded to think, that what has commonly passed for gratitude in some persons, whose other virtues have been by no means answerable to that, was in fact nothing more than the mere external sign thereof, a certain constitutional facility of expression, at best perhaps but interested and political; but this virtue in Portia was owing to a much nobler motive; she considered it as a branch of justice, whose obligations, though not immediately comprized within the letter of the law, she nevertheless held to be sacred and inviolable: Whenever a reciprocation of benefits, in kind, was either not in her power, or not expected to be made, she at least thought the remembrance thereof should never be effaced; and, so far as the delicacy of munificence would admit of it, she thought even verbal acknowledgement, upon all proper occasions, and an assiduous perseverance in every friendly office, a duty altogether indispensable.

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The praise of gratitude, as a strong incentive to the practice of it, has indeed run very high in the estimation of all ages; and we particularly collect from some of the most authentick records of antient history, that, of all the virtues, this was advanced to hold the first rank of precedence amongst the Egyptians, who were universally allowed, at least till the period of their degeneracy into downright barbarism and idolatry, to be a very learned and sagacious people: and certainly the glory they derived from thus cultivating and encouraging a constant principle of gratitude amongst all degrees of men, as I am to suppose that it proceeded from a most laudable motive, affords the clearest demonstration of their wisdom, as it abundantly proves how well calculated their government must have been to promote the true happiness of society; since, without all doubt, a mutual intercourse of benefits, which yet, exclusive of gratitude, can never be supported, is the strongest band of amity and concord, both publick and private, that can possibly subsist amongst mankind; from whose obligations the prince himself is no more exempt than the beggar; for although the latter, thro' indigence or other misfortunes, may actually be incapable of keeping up such an inter-

intercourse in kind, he is nevertheless indispenfibly tied down to the practice of gratitude in fome degree, that the merit of every beneficent action may be rewarded, if not by an adequate remuneration, at leaft with fuch complacency and fatisfaction of mind, as may help to preferve a conftant difpofition towards benevolence, which flagrant inftances of ingratitude are fometimes too apt to extinguish.

But if the reafon of this connection between munificence and gratitude, as resulting from the general dependance mankind have upon each other, appeared in fo ftrong a light to fome fages in the heathen world, as to extort their endeavours for reducing it into practice, how much more forcibly, and upon how much more interefting motives, has the practice of univerfal charity and benevolence been recommended and inculcated as a duty in the christian difpenfation? exclusive too of every profpect of gratitude or reward in this world: blefs them that curfe you; do good to them that hate and perfecute you; return not evil for evil; this is the immediate voice of divine infpiration; and difficult as thefe injunctions may poffibly feem to be to our paffions, a compliance with them is nevertheless perfectly reconcilable

cible to undepraved reason; for though the full reward of such compliance be not actually promised to us here, yet thus much, by way of encouragement, we may be certain of from experience, that as innocence, patience, and a persevering spirit of benevolence, will always communicate peace of conscience and tranquillity of mind, consequently our compliance may, in some degree, be justly allowed to produce its own reward even in this world; and upon this unerring model it was, that Portia had formed her principles of charity, benevolence, and gratitude.

But to return to some farther particulars of her history. Careless had now been dead about two years, and Portia but just so far recovered from the sad effects of her late misfortunes, as to begin to take the sweets of that calm and undisturbed repose which her brother's kindness and protection so generously afforded her, when an adventure occurred, that to her was full as disagreeable as it was extraordinary: the reader may remember, that before her acquaintance with Careless she had been just upon the point of marriage with Machaon, who had receded from his engagement in a most abrupt and unaccountable manner, and had thereby treated her and
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her whole family with the utmost indignity and injustice: from which period to the present she had never inquired, nor heard any thing farther about him, but supposed that he was either dead, or still continued to reside abroad; the latter of which, it seems, he had done from the time of the event above-mentioned, and was but very lately returned; but before his departure he took care to settle a correspondence with some friend here, in whom he could thoroughly confide, that should, from time to time, transmit to him a faithful and particular account of Portia's whole behaviour during his absence: the truth is, he had loved her from the beginning with the most fervent and unalterable passion; and had received from her every proof of a sincere return that was consistent with the strictest modesty to grant; yet so it unfortunately fell out, that, before the completion of their mutual happiness could take place, they were both basely abused, without suspecting the least deception, but particularly Machaon, against whose life, as if by assassination, there seemed to have been a formed design, as will presently be seen, which gave occasion to the appearance of his having acted with so much dishonour towards Portia and her family.

Indeed

Indeed the heart of man is often deceitful and base beyond measure; and yet, I believe, upon the first pleasing idea of the object in view, too partially represented, as is generally the case, by the imagination, it may not always be so thoroughly sensible thereof itself, as when the ruinous effects of harbouring and indulging an unruly though darling passion become too glaring to admit of any palliation, and too fatal for any remedy to repair; nor can I suppose that even the worst of mankind at first intend perpetrating all those flagitious acts, of which, by the obstinate indulgence of such a passion, they afterwards become guilty; till having too long neglected and stifled all the tender calls of reason and conscience, they are at last, by meer desperation, hurried on to inextricable ruin.

The case now before us was in a great measure thus unhappily circumstanced; Careless became violently enamoured of Portia from the first moment he had seen her, and determined, even at the risk of life, nay of eternity itself, to possess her; but considering the unsettled situation he was then in, he wisely judged, than an immediate application, instead of procuring him success, might prove the certain means of his being excluded from visiting
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any more in a family, where he was well received as a common acquaintance, and moreover treated with some particular marks of respect, on account of the friendship that had long subsisted between Dennis Tradewell of Amsterdam and him; he therefore prudently resolved to suspend all direct overtures of address to Portia till the arrival of this friend, who was expected, upon a visit, into England, so soon as he could with safety absent himself from the multiplicity of business in which he was engaged : in the mean time Careless, who now thought himself an able politician, proceeded to negotiate, by letter, with his friend upon the merits of his passion for Portia, and despaired not of bringing him at last wholly into his views; which that he effectually accomplished, has been already seen, but some of the base, iniquitous means he made use of for that purpose have not as yet been thoroughly laid open.

It happened a little unfortunately for Careless, that a considerable time before the arrival of his friend Dennis Tradewell, the affection of Portia had been deeply engaged in favour of Machaon, a man of most amiable character, whose whole family had long been well known to that of Portia, and adding to this the powerful

powerful advantage of a very considerable fortune, his alliance was looked upon as a most desirable event ; his person was graceful and genteel, and quite agreeable to Portia, but his principles and true character were known to be so unexceptionably good, that all delay, with a view to make enquiry upon that account, was thought wholly unnecessary : thus powerful was the rival with whom Careless was now to contend ; but all this neither diminished his passion, nor daunted his resolution, for difficulties, the more insuperable they appeared, the more violently did they inflame both ; happy indeed had it been, as well for himself, as for all the parties concerned in the issue of this affair, had that undaunted spirit of his been directed, as much by a principle of honour, in the prosecution of his passion, as it was inspired by an object every way worthy thereof ; but he, in spite of an excellent understanding, like too many others, was guilty of the most unpardonable error, not to say crime, in acting, as if he believed that, where the interest of the heart is really concerned, all scruples of honour, which obstruct its gratification, may be overlooked with impunity.

He knew full well the solemn engagement that subsisted between Portia and
Machaon,

Machaon, and clandestinely set every engine at work to defeat it's success, tho' wholly without effect, 'till the last vile machination was made use of, which nothing but infernal malice could suggest.

For some time before the day of this intended marriage was fixed on, proper emissaries had been employed by Careless, to infuse into the mind of Machaon certain suspicions, that were highly injurious to Portia's honour ; as if she had in secret admitted the addresses of Careless ; but as Machaon well knew, that all insinuations of this kind were utterly inconsistent with her character, he accordingly treated them with the just contempt they deserved, relying on her virtue, and the sincerity of her affection with so entire a confidence, that he thought it would in some measure be offering violence to both, should he communicate to her, or any of her family, so much as the least hint of that scandalous information which he had thus received ; the affair therefore, notwithstanding the baseness of this attempt, proceeded in a very prosperous train, as hath been intimated already, till the very morning whereon the parties were to have been united, when about five o' clock Machaon was hastily called up, and received a letter from Careless, confirming
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in Substance the full force of the above information, with the material addition of avowing from Portia's own consent an incontestable right to the possession of her heart ; and withal insisting, in a peremptory manner, upon an immediate interview, the place of rendezvous being appointed, where Careless informed him he was then waiting, determined to assert his right at the hazard of his life, in case that Machaon should persist in the unavailing resolution of proceeding any farther with that lady.

Machaon, though a man of peaceful disposition, was yet by no means deficient in point of spirit ; and however he might secretly disapprove the occasion which now called upon him to exert it, yet as he observed that custom and common fame had usurped the guardianship of honour so absolutely as to be able, in an instant, to stigmatize even the brave man himself with the vile appellation of coward, who should coyly hesitate at an invitation to commit murder, whenever that destructive principle of false honour gave brutal courage the least opportunity for so doing ; I say, for want of true resolution, in fact, Machaon thought himself obliged, in point of honour, to accept the appointed interview, directly contrary, as he knew
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it was, to every suggestion both of reason and religion ; for he was, in truth, no infidel, though now grown all at once so like an abandoned one, that he chose, in spite of conviction, to risque the perils of eternity, rather than survive the bugbear infamy of being censured by fools and knaves ; for without doubt the wise, the virtuous, and the truly brave, would all have instantly absolved him from the imputation of cowardice, for not engaging in so bad a cause, or otherwise it must at all times seem highly reasonable and decent, to pay a punctilious deference even to the challenge of a highwayman, who wantonly shall claim, by merit of his pistol, an absolute right to the possession of what is justly the property of another.

However,~in regard to the issue of this combat, it was, in truth, the artifice of Careless, rather than the superiority of his prowess, that gave him all the advantage which he gained in the end over his rival ; though it must be owned, that even victory had like to have proved fatal to him, being full as severely wounded in the duel as Machaon ; who now supposing it altogether improbable, that any man could be mad enough to engage in so desperate an adventure, without having previously
received

received the strongest assurances of the lady's affection, who was the sole cause of their quarrel ; I say, from this persuasion he concluded, but with unpardonable precipitancy, that Portia must, without all question, be most consummately faithless and base, and consequently unworthy of all farther care or attention on his part ; whereas the truth is, she was intirely innocent, and so little acquainted with Careless at this time, that she never once suspected his having the least design upon her : had she known that he was the person with whom Machaon then fought, she would most probably have detected his vile contrivance, in making use of her name to facilitate his execrable project ; and in that case I am very confident, that nothing could ever have prevailed upon her to have married him ; but he acted throughout the whole affair with so much precaution and cunning, as even to have no seconds that might possibly appear as witnesses against him, and during his whole life he kept it a profound secret from Portia ; he knew, the resentment he had thus spirited up in his rival, against his mistress, was too strong to admit of any terms of reconciliation by way of eclaircissement, at least before his plot had operated successfully ;
and

*and afterwards, it would be to no purpose; the snare, in short, was too well laid for Machaon easily to avoid falling into it, so that the latter was indeed the dupe of his own credulity, and merited, in some degree, the punishment he met with, for his too hasty and unjust resentment against Portia, who loved him with the utmost tenderness and fidelity.

The consequences which immediately ensued upon this occasion, have already been fully related in a former part of this work, and it was not till near twelve months after the death of Careless, that Machaon was undeceived in regard to the abuse and base imposition which had been practised on him by that wretch; but if he was formerly agitated with all the violence of indignation and fury, transported almost to madness by jealousy and disappointed love, he was now tortured still more severely by the consciousness of having so irreparably injured the innocent, the deserving Portia, and besides, the only woman whom he had ever loved: from the force of inclination therefore, as well as from an uncorrupted principle of justice, he was now determined to make all the atonement he could; and he gave indeed the highest proof of both that any man could give: he soon convinced

Tradewell how basely he had been injured by Careless; and informed him, that he was no more a stranger to the inhuman Treatment which Portia had met with, than he was to the many exemplary virtues by which she had supported herself under it; he bitterly condemned the folly and rashness of his own resentment, that had proved so fatal to both; and as he was now returned to his native country, with no other view but that of making her all the reparation in his power, by laying, not only his whole fortune, but his very life at her feet, he hoped that Tradewell, from the great equity of his disposition, would favour him with his friendship upon the occasion.

Tradewell, without giving him any positive hopes, immediately communicated this proposal to his sister, but as he was well acquainted with her prudence, and the soundness of her judgment, he by no means attempted to influence, or bias her in Machaon's favour, or to interfere farther than by giving it as his opinion, that she ought at least to allow him a patient hearing, which she readily consented to, provided that Tradewell would all the while be present; she accordingly received him with all that ease and presence of mind, that is so eminently the result of
good

- good breeding, when found in conjunction with virtue and good sense; she thanked him in the politest manner for the generous offer he had lately made in her favour, and scrupled not to acknowledge, that her present fallen condition did but too plainly evince the singular merit of such an offer, to admit the least doubt either of his sincerity, or her gratitude; and though she hoped, that nothing would ever be able to efface the just sense she then entertained of his generosity and benevolence, she must nevertheless beg leave to assure him, with the utmost candour, that the peculiarity of her fate was such, as rendered a compliance with his proposal absolutely impossible; but at the same time entreated, he would do her the justice to believe that her reluctance proceeded not from any particular dislike of his person or character; nor yet from any resentment in regard to past transactions; her resolution, she said, had long been deliberately founded on reasons, which to her would always appear invincible, and therefore, as it was irrevocably fixed, she hoped his compassion would spare her the mortification of being urged any farther on that head; for after such a declaration, she should be under a necessity of considering every farther attempt to shake that resolution, as a hostile attempt

to deprive her of the state of tranquility and happiness which she then enjoyed; and having said this, she instantly retired.

C H A P. VII.

Machaon takes his final leave of Portia; the death of Lucia, with other great afflictions of Portia's; an account of her behaviour under them; Dennis Tradewell comes to England; Charles Tradewell is captivated with the fine form of Belinda; Dennis's return to Holland, and takes Portia with him.

MACHAON's surprize is not to be expressed in words, to find Portia deaf to all his entreaties, and to every motive of interest, that he could urge in his own favour; this astonished him beyond measure, and he remained silent for some time after Portia had left the room; at last he recovered himself enough to apply to Tradewell, and begged him by their former friendship to endeavour to soften his sister's inflexibility, and to give him leave to continue his visits at his house; to which Tradewell answered, he feared he had no room to flatter himself, though he confessed he thought Portia had in this particular mistaken her interest; but
begged

begged leave to remind him, that upon the renewal of their acquaintance, he had assured him, that he should stand neuter in this affair, and not attempt to bias his sister any way ; his reasons, he said, for acting in this manner, he was certain must be obvious ; and that upon cool reflection, he himself would approve them ; that as to Portia, he knew the great rectitude of her mind, and that she was immoveable in what she thought was right ; and was very confident, her answer to him was founded upon the most mature deliberation ; and therefore, time, he believed, would work no alteration in his favour ; nevertheless, as an old and valuable acquaintance, he should be glad to see him at his house. In short, not to tire my readers, a year passed on, and Machaon still continued his visits, and Portia remained in the same disposition ; she saw him in mixed company, and behaved to him with the same politeness as to other gentlemen of Tradewell's acquaintance, but never would see him in private, nor could ever be prevailed with to receive a letter from him. Machaon now began to think he was only feeding a hopeless flame, and that there was (if even that was not too late) but one way left for him to recover his long lost peace of mind ;

which was to break off all acquaintance with the too amiable Portia, and consequently with Tradewell ; and the most effectual manner he thought of carrying this scheme into execution was, for him to quit the town. He therefore retired immediately to one of the most pleasant villages in England, bordering on the Thames ; here solitude, joined with philosophy, gave him relief. He now saw, that though Portia was the only woman in the world that could make him happy, yet for reasons beyond human penetration, that happiness was denied to him ; reflection taught him acquiescence, and time, that friend so woe brought at last ease to his tortured bosom, if not content ; he had acquired a large fortune, with a fair character, and for the remainder of his days he spent his Income in acts of beneficence and real charity ; for though he lived to a great age he never married ; he was much esteemed by the literate, and made a figure in the learned world ; yet, what was a most uncommon circumstance, he was a very agreeable companion, for he possessed all the social virtues in the highest degree.

But it is time to return to Portia ; who rejoiced to find, that Machaon had at last exerted that good understanding she knew him
him

him blessed with, and was in the road to peace; she likewise congratulated herself upon being delivered from addressees that were very disagreeable to her; for though she did justice to Machaon's merit, and admired his virtues, nay, would have greatly esteemed him for a friend, if this alone could have contributed to his happiness; yet she could never bring herself to consider him, or any other man, in a different light from the death of Careless; esteem and friendship was all that the unhappy Portia had to bestow.

She was now called upon to exercise all her stock of fortitude; and indeed, a mind less armed with virtue than her own, must have sunk under the weight; and though it was a visitation she had not yet met, Portia received it as she ought.

For of all the numerous train of evils that mankind are subject to on this sublunary globe, the greatest surely is the death of valuable friends: Portia's youngest son and her only daughter, in whose infant minds she had beheld all the dawning virtues that her own fond heart could wish, and which, in anticipation, she had amused herself in cultivation, to make them useful as well as ornamental members of society, were both at once snatched from her by the same fatal distemper: this blow

was immediately succeeded by the death of the ever to be honoured wife and good Lucia, who, like a shock of corn ripe for the reaper's hand, full of years, went to her grave in peace: Portia's eldest son, and now only child, survived his grand-mother but a little while; a violent fever in a few days hurried him from the arms of the indulgent Portia: he was a youth of the most promising genius, and of a very sweet disposition; the progress he had made in his studies much exceeded his years; and his filial piety was so great, that Portia justly promised herself she should find in him not only a son, but a friend and protector.

Such a train of afflictions, each following the other so closely, for they all happened in less than a year, few people could have supported; but Portia was always equal to herself for the reasons I have given elsewhere; her sentiments upon this occasion were the same with the inimitable doctor Young, in his Night-Thoughts; where he says,

All, all is right, by God ordained, or done,
And who, but God, resumed the friends
he gave;

And have I been complaining then so long,
Complaining of his favours, pain and death:
Who,

Who, without pain's advice, would e'er be
good;

Who, without death, but would be good
in vain:

Heav'n gives us friends to bless the present
scene,

Resumes them to prepare us for the next.

All evils natural are moral goods,

All discipline indulgence on the whole:

None are unhappy; all have cause to smile,

But such as to themselves that cause deny.

Our faults are at the bottom of our pains;

Error, in act or judgment, is the source

Of endless sighs: we sin, or we mistake,

And nature tax: when false opinion stings,

Let impious grief be banish'd, joy indulg'd;

But chiefly then, when grief puts in her
claim:

Joy from the joyous frequently betrays,

Oft lives in vanity, and dies in woe;

Joy amidst ills corroborates, exalts;

'Tis joy and conquest, joy and virtue too:

A noble fortitude in ills delights.

Heav'n—earth—ourselves—'tis duty—
glory, peace.

Affliction is the good man's shining scene;

Prosperity conceals his brightest ray:

As night to stars—woe lustre gives to man:

Heroes in battle—pilots in the storm,

And virtue in calamities—admire:

The crown of manhood is a winter joy.

An evergreen—that stands the northern
blast,
And blossoms in the rigour of our fate.

The first time that Portia related these melancholy particulars of her story to me, I could not forbear expressing some concern, joined with astonishment, how a woman of her exemplary piety should be thus in a manner singled out to suffer such severe inflictions from providence; she hastily interrupted me, and said, my dear Cornelia, your youth is the only excuse that even my regard and tenderness can possibly make for you; never dare to set rules to omniscience in the government of the world; you have, Cornelia, continued she, been making use of words without ideas; but take this for a maxim, the Almighty has no delight in the misery of his creatures, and therefore whatever we suffer here is either to prevent a severer punishment, or to prepare us for greater blessings; the ways of providence are inscrutable; they are not to be inquired into by finite beings; and if we find them grievous, the only method to prove them otherwise, is to submit to God's decrees with an entire resignation; a contrary procedure, said she, will not alleviate, but must infallibly increase the burthen,

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as we are not able to distinguish between the scourges and blessings of life; if my fortune and friends had been uninterruptedly continued to me, said Portia, it is highly probable I should have been wretched; but this is certain, whoever depends upon providence can never want a support; and surely it is not difficult to bring ourselves to believe in the very fountain of all truth; especially when we consider that our distrust can be of no service to us; for, as the royal poet observes, who so is wise will ponder these things, and they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord; I now, said she, look up to heaven with gratitude for the unexpected blessings that have been poured into my lap, and upon my fellow creatures with good-nature, benevolence, and a universal charity.

But as I fear this long digression from the principal story may not equally please all my readers, so I would willingly make the best apology in my power, and must therefore beg leave to remind them, that at first I promised to give them the secret of the grand cosmetick, and consequently cannot omit the least particular that relates to the valuable Portia, who was in possession of the whole art, without an injury to them. My apprehension of giving

offence arises from having observed, that there are people in the world who are jealous of those who pretend to instruct them. We are all fond of our own reason and judgment, and are but too apt to suspect our best friends of some design, who endeavour to persuade us to our own good, if that good happens to be contrary to our own inclination; for the power that inclination has over the judgment is much greater than can well be imagined by those people who have not experienced it; indeed it is to the usurpation of inclination, and the judgment lying dormant, that I place all the errors of the female world: but, besides all this, there is a species of pride, a fantastical punctilio of honour, in us poor mortals, which will hardly permit us to own ourselves in a condition to want another person's advice; we all love to make our own experiments, and sooner trust any sense than our ears; but I must beg my readers to remember it is Portia that now speaks, Portia, who had herself practised all she recommends; and, as it is the happiness of my female readers that I aim at, I would fain flatter myself that some few among them, at least, would applaud the goodness of my heart, in attempting to give them a true copy, though I confess a faint one, of this great original.

I now return to my history; and am to acquaint my readers that Dennis Tradewell, of Amsterdam, had been in a declining state of health for some time; his physicians apprehended he was going into a consumption, and therefore pressed him to try a change of air; he now determined to come to England, having before passed some months in the south of France without any sensible effect; he accordingly came here, and had, upon his arrival, a consultation of the most eminent of the whole faculty of physick; they were unanimous in ordering him to Bristol; thither therefore he went, attended by Charles Tradewell and Portia; and this place it seemed was destined for the surrender of Charles's heart; for here it was that he first saw the enchanting Belinda; this lady was not unknown to Portia before this time, though not of her acquaintance; and Charles, who had, unmoved, beheld all the blooming beauties of this great town, now wondered chance had never thrown this angel in his way. Dennis Tradewell continued at Bristol all the season; but received no sort of benefit. Upon his return to London, all his Complaints grew worse; and as his health seemed gradually to decay, he now determined to return Home, after eight month's absence; and

and this resolution he was obliged to put in execution sooner than he at first intended, having received letters that informed him, that his presence in Holland was become absolutely necessary; he therefore prepared to leave England as soon as possible, but not without taking his sister Portia with him, who, he said, had now no particular attachment to stay in England; he pressed this point so very strenuously, that at last she consented; perhaps the rather, as she secretly imagined that her brother Charles would fall a voluntary sacrifice to the beauteous form of Belinda, a match she could by no means approve, had her fortune been three times what it was; but this she did not think it was prudent to mention to either of her brothers, as Charles appeared remarkably reserved on this subject, and Dennis's health was, as she thought, in too bad a state to be disturbed with what she hoped would prove only an idle conjecture of her own: Charles attended Dennis and Portia to Harwich, where they parted from each other in so affectionate a manner, that one would have imagined they had foreseen this farewell was to be eternal, as indeed it proved. Charles stayed to see the ship under sail, and then returned to London.

C H A P. VIII.

Dennis Tradewell and Portia goes to Holland; Portia receives several advantageous offers of marriage there, all which she rejects; Charles Tradewell marries Belinda; the death of Dennis; Portia leaves Holland, and resides for several years in France, at last comes to England, gives Cornelia an invitation to live with her; some account of their manner of life.

DENNIS and Portia arrived safe in Holland; and Portia observed with pleasure, that he bore the fatigue both of his journey and voyage from England much better than could have been imagined, which gave her some flattering expectations that he was really better. - As he had lived at Amsterdam from his youth, and had acquired a large fortune with a fair character, being remarkable for probity and strict justice in all his dealings, so the news of his arrival was received with joy; all the people of distinction, both in that and the neighbouring provinces, came to congratulate him upon his return, and to pay their compliments to Portia. As his distemper was of a flattering nature, so it is not to be wondered at that he thought himself much better; and

and the company of the engaging Portia greatly contributed to tune his mind to peace; for in her he found not only an agreeable chearful companion, but a faithful friend, on whose judgment he might safely rely: however he thought it prudent, in case of a relapse, immediately to set about contracting his affairs, for fear of accidents; and as his dealings were very extensive, so he foresaw this was a work that would require much time, and therefore the sooner he began it the better.

Portia had, without intending it, made several conquests; and had rendered herself so very agreeable, that Dennis Tradewell's sister was the chief subject of conversation; in short, she here received several very advantageous offers of marriage; those gentlemen who applied first to Dennis, believing that the securest way to gain Portia, received for answer, that his sister was entirely her own mistress, and that he would no way interfere in the matter; Portia herself rejected all the dazzling proposals that were made her in so polite a manner, that, though they ceased to be her lovers, they still continued to be her admirers and friends: Portia thought upon this occasion with the matrons of antient Rome, who, as monsieur Rollin has informed us, believed it inglorious to
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enter into second vows; though I apprehend this part of Portia's character will not recommend her to some of our modern ladies, who, if I am rightly informed, enter into engagements with two or three at once, besides the distinguished favourite to whom at first they have plighted their vows.

Dennis and Portia had now been in Holland near two years; in which time they had often heard from Charles Tradewell my father; but Portia had observed, that for the last year he had wrote much seldomer; never indeed to Dennis but when business obliged him; and all his letters to herself were rather formal than affectionate; this uncommon coolness in his behaviour alarmed her; and as she was not conscious she had done any thing to merit it, she wrote to Charles to know what was become of that open sincerity once so very conspicuous in his character, and which indeed is the grand characteristic of every gentleman and man of honour to his approved friends: his answer to this letter was ambiguous; but his next letters to Dennis and herself cleared up the mystery, by informing them he then was, and had been for some time, making his addresses to Belinda; and that he had met with the greatest opposition from her family,

mily, as I have informed my readers in the beginning of this work; though he flattered himself he should now succeed; his letters were filled with high encomiums of Belinda's sprightly wit, the brilliancy of her conversation, and the superior power of her external charms.

Dennis's surprise upon the receipt of this letter is not to be expressed: he had never been a man of gallantry, no not in his youth; and was now past the meridian of life: he knew nothing of Belinda, but what Portia had occasionally informed him of at Bristol; but he knew enough to make him believe she had too much gaiety in her disposition to make a proper wife for his brother: Charles was a grave man, used to, and fond of domestick happiness; Dennis remembered her person, and admired her as he would have done a picture, but had never thought of her longer than he saw her; and now to find Charles dwell so much upon the perfections of Belinda's person, was to him like the whims of a distempered brain.

He therefore not only wrote himself, but begged Portia, in the most pathetic manner, to use all her rhetorick, and endeavour to save this much-loved brother from impending ruin; in short, they omitted no argument to dissuade Charles from

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an alliance with Belinda ; but all alas in vain, he was a slave to her fine form, and consequently deaf to the advice, nay, intreaties of his real friends. This very soon became an affair of the greatest concern to Dennis ; he repented Charles's behaviour so highly, which he termed obstinacy, that all correspondence was broke off between Dennis, Portia, and Tradewell ; and Dennis immediately altered his will, and left his whole fortune to Portia, without any limitations ; he did not long survive this disposition of his affairs, for as he was almost worn out by a tedious lingering indisposition of body, so this blow to his fraternal affection, which had never before been uninterrupted, like a northern blast to a flower in autumn, sunk him to the grave.

Portia, upon the death of Dennis, found herself intitled to a very large fortune ; but as women are generally unacquainted with business, and in a country to the customs of which she was an entire stranger, so it is not to be wondered at that she lost considerable sums of money ; and with all her care and industry to settle her affairs, she could not realize much above forty thousand pounds, English money.

When this was accomplished, she immediately quitted Holland, where she had

now

now no connexions, and went to France ; where there were large sums due to her from Dennis's correspondents, and where indeed all her relations lived ; and as Tradewell from the time of his marriage with Belinda had been dead to Portia, so she chose to continue in France to that period of time I have before mentioned.

Upon her arrival in England, she took a large and very handsome house, and furnished it in the most elegant manner ; it was in a genteel, airy, but retired part of the town, far from the noise and bustle of the great world ; here, with herself and six servants, (which were all that composed her family) I received an invitation to live ; she expressed the most grateful sense of the obligations she was under to both Hortensius and Arspacia, for their favours, their care, and in short, their whole behaviour to me. There was a kind of sympathy in the virtues of these three Persons, that led them insensibly to create so great and strict a friendship, that, I think I may say, they formed another triumvirate.

Portia's family was governed with the nicest decorum, her own most excellent example she justly thought was the best monitor to her servants, who considered her not only as their patroness, their friend,
but

but almost their parent; duty and obedience held but the second place in their esteem; affection for their lady prompted them with pleasure to execute even her least command.

The moment I entered her house, she assured me I was at home; and in the politest manner imaginable, begged in return, I would favour her with the first place in my friendship; she told me, she hoped I should never discover her the morose old woman; her afflictions, she believed, had not affected her natural temper, which was to encourage chearfulness, and to be an enemy only to vice. She immediately presented me with an hundred guineas, which she said was for my cloaths and pocket; and likewise told me, I should annually receive the same sum from her, she intending to have the interest of my little fortune laid up with the principal.

Our lives glided on so regularly, that every fresh day might appear literally another yesterday; we constantly attended the service of the church every morning, and if the weather permitted, we afterwards took a walk, or the air in Portia's coach for the benefit of our healths; but we never sacrificed the mornings either to pleasure or visitings, but kept them sacred to occasional business, or the im-

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provements of our own minds ; for as Portia knew the value of time, so she never threw it away, by doing trifles of nothing.

In one of these morning excursions, Portia said to me, in the plan of your education, my dear Cornelia, I have consulted your glory more than my own ; and I shall be compleatly happy to see you good and virtuous, without entertaining the least vanity in forming you either by blood or precepts ; and your great docility in listening to all I say, makes me flatter myself, you will do all that I desire. The subject I am now going to recommend to you is of the utmost consequence, and calls for your greatest attention, being nothing less than religion.

Where I to define religion, said she, I should call it exalted reason, sifted from the grosser parts of earth ; it dwelleth in the upper region of the mind, where there are the fewest clouds to darken it, it is both the foundation and the crown of all the virtues ; it is morality improved, and raised to its height by being carried nearer heaven, the only place where perfection resideth ; it cleanseth the understanding as it brusheth off the filth that hangeth on our souls ; if we was hired to practice it, religion would be able to out-bid the corrupted

- corrupted world with all it can offer, if reason is admitted to be judge of the value of the two. As this is a true state of the case, it is worth all your care, my dear Cornelia, to make religion your choice in your youth and prosperity, and not do as I have known some ladies, who make religion a refuge in old age and adversity. True piety, said she, will be your strongest guard and surest protection, and without this, the strictest woman in the world, let her ideas of honour be ever so nice, cannot always answer for the safety and preservation of her virtue; let me therefore earnestly recommend to you, to make your life a steady course of virtue, that it may run like a smooth stream, and let religion be the spring from which you practice all your virtues, but take great care that your devotion is not constrained, for, like all other duties, you must make it your pleasure too, or else it will have very little efficacy; a devout mind is raised above the little vexations and cross accidents of life, to which other people for want of this are daily exposed; I do not recommend a stupid indifference, but a wise resignation in all things to the divine will; by this means your mind will always be in a state of ease and tranquility, you will not be tied too close to this world, but it will
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hang about you like a loose garment, which is soon to be parted with, to put on a better; I could say a great deal more, but I think religion ought not to descend to the borrowing any arguments out of itself, since there we may find every thing that should invite us.

Cornelia perceiving Portia to be silent, returned her unfeigned thanks, and said, that by the assistance of her good example, she hoped, in time, to be able to carry her most excellent precepts into practice, but begged her, if she was not already fatigued with talking, she would favour her with some instructions for her conduct in the world; as she said, she was very certain, that a lady of her great penetration and experience, must be able to furnish her with many useful lessons to that purpose; which, said Cornelia, as I am young, I greatly stand in need of, and yet am not capable of making those necessary reflections which I want; to which Portia answered, the world, indeed, Cornelia, is a very dangerous enemy for a young mind unarmed to encounter with:

For, while we learn to fence with public
guilt,

Full oft we feel its foul contagion too,
If less than heavenly virtue is our guard.

Thus;



' Thus ; a strange kind of curs'd necessity
 Brings down the sterling temper of his
 soul
 By base alloy—to bear the current stamp
 Below, call'd wisdom :—sinks him into
 safety,
 And brands him into credit with the
 world,
 Where specious titles, dignify, disgrace,
 And nature's injures.—Are arts of life,
 Where brighter reason prompts to bolder
 Crimes,
 And heavenly talents make infernal hearts :
 That unsurmountable extreme of guilt :
 Dr. YOUNG'S Night-Thoughts.

You have set me a very difficult task,
 Cornelia, continued Portia, but to give
 you a proof, that nothing in my power
 shall ever be wanting that may conduce
 to your happiness, I shall attempt it ;
 though, perhaps, by doing so, I shall
 risk the good opinion you at present en-
 tertain of my Abilities.

I think, said Portia, it is no small part
 of wisdom, to guard against folly, and,
 perhaps, it may be a surer way of in-
 structing a young lady to tell her what
 she should not do, than what she should
 do ; there are so many temptations in
 this great town, and what is worse, so
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many promoters of vice and folly to be met with, that I hope you will not imagine it proceeds from spleen and ill-nature, if I acquaint you, that you cannot possibly be too careful of your company and conduct. Always remember, Cornelia, that Eden had not an abstemious Eve; and her fair daughters prove their pedigree, and ask their Adams who would not be wise; it is absolutely necessary therefore, before you come to act your part on the stage of this great theatre the world, that your virtue should be well grounded, and attended with a very strong resolution; I must teach you to set a just value upon yourself, and to be ashamed of nothing but vice, which is really shameful, because it is criminal; and this is in short only the same precept that Epictetus gave to his young pupil; if, said he, you have a desire to make any proficiency in philosophy, you must first be thoroughly convinced of the excellency of my rules, and resolve to observe them upon all occasions; you must expect to be laughed at, and derided by the vulgar; Epictetus here means all people that have a low and vulgar manner of thinking, and with concern I tell you, you will meet with too many that deserve this distinction among people of high birth and large

• large fortunes, but regard not their opinions of you ; think only how you may act agreeably to the dictates of your reason and conscience ; be good and wise, that is sufficient ; desire not the applauses of the million.—But the generality of young people of the present age think this too hard a lesson, they only endeavour to render themselves agreeable to those with whom they converse ; and as the world is more inclined to vice than virtue, they comply with their taste, rather than lose their acquaintance ; from this principle most of the extravagancies, that we daily see people of the best sense guilty of, may be accounted for.

From hence too proceeds that variety of folly, which appears in the actions of the more unthinking part of the world ; these poor creatures are betrayed into faults meerly from want of thought ; whereas, the others are obliged to do violence to themselves, and put a stop to their own reflections, in order to commit them ; what a mean abject spirit is this, to lower our own understandings, and subject them to the caprice of the senseless and stupidly vicious ; to suppress our reason for fear of their censure, and not dare to be wise and good, because it

is not the will or the interest of our acquaintance that we should be so.

Can Britons, can lovers of liberty, (for there is still some among us that seem fond of the name of freedom) thus submit to have fetters put upon their very minds, which is the worst kind of slavery; but do you, Cornelia, detest the very thought of being thus shackled? for, indeed, continued Portia, it is owing in a great measure to this mental cowardice, that vice has so prevailed among us.

For vice would soon give place, had virtue the courage to appear in all her native beauty; would you then enjoy happiness in old age, by which I mean peace of mind; nothing but a youth spent in virtue can produce it; and, I am very certain, there is no other method than religion, to obtain this most desirable end; which will turn all our passions and affections towards heaven.

Here Portia ended, and Cornelia returned her grateful thanks, and as it grew late, they hastened home to dress and prepare for dinner.

As I look upon a good education to be a great blessing; and believe our happiness both here and hereafter wholly depends upon it, so I have dwelt particularly on Portia's precepts, hoping they may
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be of service to some of my fair readers, who have had the misfortune to be neglected in their youth; and in that case I advise the cultivation of their minds at any age; for whatever mean opinion the gentlemen entertain of the ladies in general, nature has certainly bestowed upon some of them capacities and good understandings; and the very wide difference that appears between the sexes, is in some measure owing to the womens receiving no education at all; which indeed is now the case among us, with some few exceptions.

Would my fair country-women believe this, and be persuaded to take a little pains for the improvement of their minds, we should soon find some of them would be remarkable for true wit and sound judgment; at present the English ladies are distinguished by foreigners only by fine shapes and lovely faces; this would effectually secure the conquests of their eyes; nay more, where their external charms failed, their intellectual would prevail; and, what is a very material circumstance, a slave thus made would be a slave eternal, as the charms that first subdued him would improve by time: I forbear to mention, that this would make them valuable wives, and agreeable companions; for as that is

now the least of their care, so I fear it will not be admitted as an argument in my favour: a very little time, which might easily be spared from dress, cards, and diversions, spent every day in reading and reflection, would bring all this to pass; and that I may not appear singular in my assertion, I shall subjoin a few lines, said to be wrote by a lady, as much distinguished for her wit and beauty, as by the high station she holds in the world.

A female mind like a rude fallow lies,
No seed is sown, but weeds spontaneous
rise;

As well might we expect in winter, spring,
As land untill'd a fruitful crop should bring;
Can female youth, left to weak woman's
care,

Misled by custom, folly's fruitful heir,
'Told that their charms a monarch may en-
slave,

That beauty, like the gods, can kill or save,
Taught the arcana's, the mysterious arts,
By ambush--dress--to catch unwary hearts;
If wealthy born, taught to lisp French,
and dance,

Their morals, like Lucretia's, left to chance,
Strangers to reason—and reflection made,
Left to their passions—and by them be-
trayed,

Untaught

Untaught the noble end of glorious truth,
Bred to deceive, even from their earliett
youth,

Unus'd to books, not virtue taught to
prize,

Whose mind a savage waste unpeopled lies,
Which to supply, trifles fill up the void,
And idly busy, to no end employ'd,
Can these from such a school more virtue
shew,

Or tempting vice treat like a common foe;
Can they resist when soothing pleasure woes,
Preserve their virtue when their fame they
lose;

No more can we expect our modern wives
Hero's should breed, who lead such use-
less lives.

C H A P. IX.

*A continuation of Portia's manner of life,
with an attempt towards the characters
of some people who visited her; a descrip-
tion of Portia's particular friends.*

PORTIA kept a great deal of good
company of both sexes; if people of
genteel easy fortunes, good understand-
ings, liberal educations, and the most un-
blemished characters, are allowed to come
properly under that denomination; yet

Portia had no concerts of musicks, no balls, no routs, nor private parties at cards, nor did she see masques; yet, notwithstanding all this, Portia was well visited, as the phrase is, though the grand magnet seems to be wanting, as it is pleasure now, and only pleasure, that attracts the mind, and captivates the understanding.

Whether this was owing to the distinguishing taste of Portia's acquaintance, or to their invincible stupidity, I shall not take upon me absolutely to determine; though I am very well inclined to believe it was the former; but as I profess myself not to be an inhabitant of the great and gay world, so I apprehend my opinion will have little weight, as all people out of that elucidating circle are said to be deprived of common sense: but be that as it may; Portia's house in an afternoon was like a seminary, where the old might improve in virtue and wisdom, and the young might learn all that was laudable and praise-worthy; all new things worth reading were read, and comments made upon the work by the company then present.

At other times the conversation turned upon some useful piece of history, or the recommendation of some virtue which seemed to be grown obsolete and out of use

use among us, or the degradation of some reigning vice, or folly; for it was Portia's opinion, that folly unproved was a tacit invitation to crimes of a much deeper die.

Portia's situation in life indeed obliged her sometimes to admit people, who had no title by their own merit to her company, and who were incapable of bearing any part in the conversations that were carried on at her house; but then they were allied to persons of merit and virtue, or by the rank they held in the world could not decently be denied admittance into all polite apartments; and her good-nature gave them an opportunity to improve; at least they did not offend; and sometimes, by exhibiting a fashionable absurdity, they gave a sprightly turn to the whole conversation; and, at the worst, they only added to her furniture by filling empty chairs.

Portia was no enemy to the stage; and often would say, that, under some proper regulations, she believed the theatre would be of use; she therefore never opposed my going there in company of Arspacia; as she thought from a good play a young woman might rise wiser or better; though she never went herself. She would say, that the world to her was like an exhausted flower, its sweets were gone; and as I

judge of the value of things, would she continue, by my term in them, so pleasure now holds but a very low price in my estimation: she would sometimes, with a smile, say, the world, that thoroughly knows its own interest, always quits old people; I wish they would take the hint, and quit the world; I do not mean, said she, to have them absolutely interred, but only buried to the publick diversions of the town.

I must inform my readers, that one day in every week we spent with Hortensius and Arispacia; and they did the same with us; and there was always a full assembly at both houses: one afternoon the conversation turned upon the subject of happiness; a lady in company made a very trite observation, that happiness was only opinion; to which Hortensius answered, he thought happiness was any pleasure that would bear reflection.

To this Portia said, that she begged leave to differ both from the lady and Hortensius; and first as to the lady, that called it only an opinion; for, said she, if that is once admitted, happiness must be a vague airy notion only, as it depended on every single individual judgment; and two thirds of mankind appeared by their actions to be incapable of forming any judgment.

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As to Hortensius, he was undoubtedly right in his first principle; but then he had confined happiness to pleasure only; which, she said, she could by no means admit; for,

* True happiness ne'er enter'd at an eye;
True happiness resides in things unseen:
No smiles of fortune ever blest the bad,
Nor can her frowns rob innocence of joys;
That jewel wanting—triple crowns are poor.

Portia continued, and said, though she herself was now in possession of real happiness, yet it was not in her power to define it; but the whole company being unanimous in desiring her sentiments upon this subject; she immediately complied; and thus began;

Happiness consists in that health of body which is founded on temperance and exercise, and a tranquility of mind that results from innocency and virtue; it requires so much of the goods of life as will satisfy its own natural wants, and some to spare for the relief of other people; just as much pleasure as will keep the heart chearful, and the eye serene; and as much knowledge as will fill up the intervals of society with a pleasing, but not a too an-

* Dr. Young's Night-Thoughts.

xious contemplation ; this, ladies and gentlemen, is my opinion, or rather the best definition I am capable of making of happiness ; and, if you admit it, I believe you will join with me in saying, that it is within a very narrow compass, that the divine providence has placed the sum total of rational life, that all degrees of the human species might in some measure partake.

How easy is this to obtain, if we would but give ourselves leave ; and yet, alas, how solicitous are we to overlook this golden mean : we suffer our weak imaginations to seduce us, and we place all our happiness in pomp, magnificence, equipage, and expence ; and we affix shame, infamy, and reproach on poverty ; and here indeed we tread mechanically in the steps of our forefathers ; but surely, for our own sakes, we should exert our understandings, and emerge from this darkness ; for we do not consider, that while we are thus wasting the sands of life in such absurd and self-tormenting fancies, that we stand stupidly insensible of far more exalted pleasures, than is in the power of wealth and grandeur to purchase ; the great and dazzling lustre of the heavens, the beautiful verdure of the earth, woods, plants, and flowers ; in short, nature, in all her vast variety of charms,

charms, addressing herself with all her eloquence to every sense, courting us to lengthen life by innocent enjoyments, which she freely offers to all without money, though far above all price; for, as doctor Young has elegantly expressed it,

What makes man wretched?—happiness deny'd?

Lorenzo no;—'tis happiness disdained;
She comes too meanly dressed to win our smile,

And calls herself content,—a homely name;
Our flame is transport, and content our scorn:

Life's modest joys we ruin, while we raise,
And all our extasies are wounds to peace,
Peace—the full portion of mankind below.

Here Portia ended; and the whole company returned her their thanks for her system of happiness, which now appeared to all present to be in their own power; but they were interrupted by the appearance of a lady, whom I shall call Mrs. Mode-love; she was the wife of a gentleman of great merit, good-nature, and large fortune; he had, when he was very young, married her; her fine person only raised her to this dignity, for he took her from the dregs of mankind; and perhaps this was the only action of his whole life,
for

for which even his enemies could call his judgment in question : this sudden exaltation, at first, as I have been told, quite turned her head ; and indeed at this time she appeared to be giddy with her greatness.

Not that she wanted a good understanding ; for this was by no means the case ; but her vanity and affectation prevented this excellence from appearing to advantage ; not a feature, nor a limb, but what was distorted, as if she had been all over convulsed, and her very voice was often so altered, that she was quite unintelligible. As Mr. Mode-love was a senator, and a true patriot, so the good of his country engrossed all his attention ; and his elegant lady amused herself in the manner that she thought most agreeable ; and this consisted chiefly in adorning her own delicate person, and the decorations of her house, in both of which she spared neither time nor expence : as she kept a great deal of what is commonly called the best company, so she was perfectly acquainted with all that was doing in town, and, very obligingly, upon her coming in, gave Portia a list of the diversions and entertainments that were then in vogue : every body present, I believe, admired the strength of her memory ; and some among
 them

them wished she had put it to a better use: when this was over, she remained silent, as not knowing what to say; and then agreeably surprized the company, by shewing she had just sense enough to take her leave of people she could not entertain, and by whom she would not improve.

To prevent any wrong impression that her fine figure might make on Cornelia, Portia, turning to her, said, whatever is the predominant passion of the mind engrosses all its faculties, and every thing is neglected to indulge it: thus it has happened to be the ambition of Mrs. Modest to commence a modern belle; dress, equipage, balls, operas, masquerades, with a long train of *et cæteras*, is her only business, while good sense, and the improvement of her understanding, is totally undervalued; all her thoughts, her time, and money, are employed to adorn her person, and her mind sinks into depravity, instead of receiving the least embellishment; and hence perhaps arises a reason for what has often occasioned me some speculation, that I have scarcely ever met with a celebrated beauty that had common sense; and to people who live abstracted from what is called the gaiety of the town, or rather, I think, I may say, who are not intoxicated with its fol-

lies.

lies, the ridiculous ambition of such a character will meet with the utmost contempt.

But I must now, continued Portia, warn you in a particular manner, my dear Cornelia, against vanity and affectation, the faults that are most apparent in Mrs. Mode-love, and of which our sex are but with too much justice generally accused. Monsieur St. Evremont, a man of as much gallantry as ever his gay nation produced, has carried his raillery on this subject as far as it will go; and from hence we may learn, that it was in his days the reigning foibles of the fair; and we have great reason to believe it is not lessened in ours.

As the love of praise is certainly implanted in our bosoms, as a strong incentive to worthy actions, I therefore confess, it is a very difficult task to get above a desire of it, in things that our reason and judgment tell us, we ought to be wholly indifferent to; for we seldom give ourselves time to distinguish in these points, in so nice a manner as they deserve; of this nature are all graces in our persons, our dress, and our deportment; which will be engaging and attractive if we think not of them, but lose their force in proportion to our endeavours

deavours to make them such; for when we give the passion for praise an unbridled liberty, our pleasure in little trifling perfections, robs us of what is due to us for great virtues and worthy qualities. The best way to get clear of affectation, or to give it a softer name, of a light fondness for applause, is to take care to throw off the love of it upon all occasions that are not in themselves laudable. When our consciousness turns upon the main design of life, and our thoughts are employed upon the chief purpose, we shall never betray an affectation, for we cannot be guilty of it; and if we are permitted to measure faults by the greatness of the punishment, there are few of a higher size than affectation, as there is scarce a greater penalty, than that of being continually laughed at. The very ingenious Mr. Addison, who, I presume, it will be allowed me, knew human nature perfectly well, has assured us, that no woman can be handsome by the force of features alone, and that a beauty, considered meerly as such, is only an object of sight, and may be allowed to amuse as a picture, but never to triumph in a higher capacity. If his doctrine should ever take effect, I fear, many fine ladies would be abridged of their power, and find themselves suddenly

denly reduced to a piece of painted canvass; this is conveying so degrading an idea of our sexes, that I would hope every woman of true spirit would disdain it, and exert those faculties heaven has blessed her with, to become a rational creature. I cannot, however, forbear making one obvious remark upon what this great man has asserted; which is this. That the generality of men are in one sense Platonick lovers, so far as to allow the greatest beauty lies in the mind; it is possible, indeed, that a most angelic form may so dazzle at first sight, that the want of mental beauty, and the deformity of affectation may not appear; but you are always to remember, that time, that great discoverer of all things, will remove the film from the lover's eyes, and then he will behold things as they really are. Portia was going on, but the entrance of three ladies put a stop to her conversation.

These ladies were as remarkable for their strict attachment to each other, as by the peculiarity of their characters; Mrs. Allgood, whom I shall begin with, was a maiden lady, of good family, good fortune, and good sense; but had taken a turn to talk of religion upon all occasions, and in all companies. She talked a great deal, and what is extraordinary, she talk-
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ed well ; but she talked for fame, she professed herself a member of the church of England, as by law established, but her doctrine was much more severe than any tenets that our church enjoins ; she had read a great deal, but they were all books of devotion ; and said, those people must have bad hearts indeed, that were capable of receiving any amusement, but from treatises of religion. She was a most inveterate enemy to the stage ; the theatre, she called a temple consecrated to the infernal deity ; and said, that she believed, neither St. Paul, when at Rome, nor any of the apostles ever frequented it, or any other public entertainments ; not by the way, that Mrs. Allgood was averse to private ones, with her select friends ; for the pleasures of the table she thought very innocent. She informed the company upon her first coming in, that she had taken the tuition of her dear friend, Mrs. Flutter's daughter, a child of eight years old, and was then teaching her a system of theology, in which this young lady was a great proficient. In short, not to tire my readers, Mrs. Allgood was a perfect devotee ; as her character appeared to Cornelia to be of a mixed nature, with something of novelty in it, so she begged of Arspacia to give her a little information about

about this lady ; to which Arspicia replied, I believe, Mrs. Allgood has some great virtues ; but I doubt, whether vanity, like a rank weed, doth not overshadow those fair flowers ; at least, I fear she is not quite so much spiritualized, as she would have the world believe ; and as, perhaps, she herself thinks the goddesses fame relates some anecdotes about her, which Mrs. Allgood's admirers say, was invented by a coquet, who told it to envy, the elder sister of ill-nature ; the purport of which is, that Mrs. Allgood is not yet quite all soul, but has some infirmities of the flesh still hanging about her.

Portia then spoke, and said, you may be wise, Cornelia, without vanity ; for wisdom doth not require so much outward shew, as inward security ; you may be prudent, without being a prude ; for I would have your modesty accompanied with an innocent gaiety, and your reserve with great good-nature ; apply yourself to learn what will embellish your mind, but let not vanity attend your knowledge. As to your philosophy, I would have it wholly christian ; make your own heart good, but be not too severe upon the failings of your fellow-creatures, who differ, perhaps, only in trifles from you ; be affable and obliging to every person
you

you converse with, but intimate with none; behave without the least pride to those people, whom heaven has made your inferiors; either in fortune or understanding; remember, that the principles of christianity put all the world on the same foot. In short, said she, I would have you do nothing, but what is truly praise-worthy, but without vanity; for the ostentation of a good action, often eclipses the glory which it would otherwise deserve. It is with a great pleasure, my dear Cornelia, continued Portia, that I see in you an emulation to raise yourself a character by which you may be distinguished; I love, said she, to see an eagerness for precedence in virtue in young people, but beware of vanity, the least tincture of it poisons all the virtues; an instance of which you have just seen in Mrs. Allgood: be not therefore too fond of applaule; yet a desire to be well thought of by the wise and good, I do not blame; no, I recommend it to you, for their approbation is like a glory round about a woman's head, it is an ornament, as well as a reward of her virtues.

And it is therefore, my dear Cornelia, that in all your actions I beg you to aim at the highest perfection; form no project, set about nothing, without saying to your-
self

recommendations, that the man of the strictest honour, justice, morality, and religion would always be preferred ; they would then change the form of their attack, and instead of decorating their own persons, would turn all their thoughts on the embellishments of their minds and manners ; as knowing that the only way ever to be successful with the fair. Another national advantage arising from a general reformation in the fair sex is, that as I have, I hope, proved clearly, it would have a great influence upon the conduct of the men ; for was the men more generally virtuous, they would be more truly valiant ; the consequence of which is, that we should have no cowards either at sea or land ; for as Shakespear has long ago told us.

It is conscience only that makes cowards of us all : what then could alarm the British nation ; not Lewis le grand, as he is stiled by his sycophants, with his army of petit maitres ; for Englishmen would then all be brave, because they would all be virtuous ; and Englishwomen would all be fair, because they all were good.

And the most effectual method, that I know of, to bring about this very desirable end is, to take characters from real life, strongly pointed, and then make
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some proper reflections upon them, that when a female mind sees the least analogy between the foible, folly, or fault, that is here represented, and what it feels in its own bosom ; it may, by immediately amending what it is now convinced is absolutely wrong, strike out the ugly resemblance, and so become at once both wise and good, according to the proverb, every one to mend one, and the work is done ; but, perhaps, it will be objected, that I am not equal to this undertaking, that I have no talent for drawing, that my colours are bad, and that the most I deserve but the name of a vile dawber, fit only to attempt a sign-post.

As it is very probable there may be truth in this charge, so I shall not go about to defend myself, but only humbly offer to their consideration my intention ; which, in spite of criticism is good ; and as the intention is, what only stamps a merit upon any action, ought therefore principally to be regarded ; so I hope the humane and good-natured part of my fair readers will permit the goodness of the design, to plead an excuse for the badness of the execution. Without farther preface, therefore, I return to my characters.

I shall now present them with *Mrs. Flutrer*, the second of the three ladies.

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mentioned in the former chapter. Mr. Flutter, husband to this lady, was a man of plain sense, and moderate fortune; they had been married some years, but had only one child, the young lady before mentioned, to be placed under the care of Mrs. Allgood. As Mrs. Flutter professed herself a modern fine lady, so, according to the invariable rules of that sect, she never condescended to the care of her family, or the performance of any domestic duties; this put Mr. Flutter under a necessity to stoop to offices which degraded his dignity, and brought him into contempt, and he lost the esteem of sensible people; for, alas! they did not know, that if he had not ordered his own dinner, his good lady would not have taken the trouble off his hands; as Mr. Flutter was a stranger to the œconomy of a household, so it is not to be wondered at, that he was grossly imposed on; and though his received character was that of a miser; yet it was notorious, that he lived greatly above his income. To account for this seeming paradox, I must return to Mrs. Flutter; she had both a native and an acquired folly, though the latter bore much the greater share; her head was a perfect triangle, equally divided between religion, metaphysics, and
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the fashion ; the first of these was owing to her intimacy with Mrs. Allgood ; Mrs. Flutter not only therefore talked about religion in all companies, but made it the subject of her letters to her acquaintance ; and yet by her conduct it did not appear, that religion had the least influence on any of her actions ; from whence I judge, it was then only in her head, for at that time it certainly had not reached her heart ; as to her passion for metaphysics, it was easily accounted for, by acquainting my readers, that she almost adored Mrs. Surface, who was a professed metaphysician ; and Mrs. Flutter considered this lady in a very high light ; for, I believe, she thought her wiser than Solomon himself ; as to the fashion indeed, she was entirely governed in that particular by her two prime ministers, her milliner, and mantua-maker ; these people were absolutely necessary to her peace and happiness, as they had it both in their power and inclination, to relieve Mrs. Flutter from two very heavy burdens, her time and her money ; both of those very valuable things she was always glad to dispose of. She piqued herself on her maternal tenderness, which all consisted in adorning the outside of the little favourite ; for her mind lay like a barren waste,

quite uncultivated, 'till Mrs. Allgood extended her charity to this fair flower, as before observed.

Whenever Mrs. Flutter spoke of her husband, it was to ridicule him, for she said, he was an non-entity; and by this means, without intending it, I am very sure she took the most effectual method to convey to the company the lowest opinion of her own understanding: when she talked with him, even before her common friends, she would tell him, she hated him. The first time Cornelia heard this, she was astonished beyond measure, to find it possible, for a well-bred woman to be guilty of so great an indecency; but she has since been told, her surprize was owing only to her want of knowledge of what was daily practiced in the polite world; by ladies, whose birth, fortune, and education entitle them to give laws to all below their own quality; and who are superior to any reflections that can be made by Plebeians on their conduct; if this is a fact, and there are really such ladies in the world, I shall take leave to tell them, that this proof of their sincerity, in acquainting the gentlemen, who have the misfortune of being their husbands, with what all the world knew before, can do no excuse for their want of good

manners,

manners, and the delicacy that ought to be inseparable from the sex; and if such ladies will voluntarily divest themselves of their dignity, and assume the language and behaviour of their menial servants, they must expect to be treated as such; for let a woman's quality be ever so high, or her fortune ever so large, unless she is distinguished by something more than her dress, she has bestowed her time to no purpose; as to Mrs. Flutter, she was too much the modern fine lady, to admit of such a vulgar thing, as affection for a husband; no, her heart was wholly engrossed by that fashionable thing, called female friendship; and, which indeed is now constituted in the room of almost every virtue, by these same friends, who are always loud in their applauses of each other; in this particular, Mrs. Flutter was a perfect enthusiast; husband, child, health, reputation, fortune, all was to be sacrificed at once, if they came in competition with her dear friends. Mrs. Flutter appeared by her dress at this visit, to have ransacked the whole globe to decorate her person; at least, it was plain no expence was spared that could augment the gaudy appearance. As her person was really fine, so she had the good nature to give it gratis; that being a part,

I think, of the present fashion. Upon her first coming in, Hortensius observed to a gentleman who sat near him, that he thought Mrs. Flutter like our first parent Eve before the fall ; for though she was naked, she was not ashamed ; to which the gentleman replied, that undoubtedly it was part of the curse pronounced upon mankind, that the females should have no shame. This was a very severe censure, and I wish the ladies of the present age would make it appear, it had no foundation in truth ; I must therefore once more address my fair country-women, and beg them to amend their whole conduct ; and by setting a good example to the male part of the creation, they will, in some measure, wipe out that indelible blot upon our characters ; for it is notorious, that the woman was the first in the transgression ; it is therefore incumbent upon us now to take the road to virtue ; for if we longer neglect doing it, I apprehend the men will say, that the serpent, by seducing Eve, took possession of the whole sex ever after.

And here I cannot forbear recommending to my fair readers a certain ornament, a great deal out of use, it is true, but, therefore, not the less becoming, called modesty ; I say, an ornament, as it really is, and perhaps was I to call it a virtue,
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some of my readers might object to the using it ; I do assure them, solemnly, it is the most becoming habit they can possibly put on, for modesty has great advantages ; it always sets off beauty, nay, it gives an agreeable shade to even ugliness itself. I have somewhere met with a little fable to this purpose, and shall, for the benefit of my fair readers, give it them as perfect as my memory will permit me now to do.

A F A B L E.

IT is said, that when Jupiter formed the passions in the human breast, he assigned every one of them its distinct abode ; modesty, however, was forgot : she was upon her petition at last introduced to him, but as he could not tell where to place her, he therefore allowed her always to accompany the great virtues ; ever since that time she is inseparably from them. She is the friend of truth, and betrays the lie that dare attack it ; she is a constant attendant upon good sense ; she is in strict union with love, and often proclaims it ; in a word, she is so absolutely necessary to beauty, that she loses her charms, whenever she appears without modesty. So much for fable.

I would therefore advise my fair readers, to let the chief part of their finery be modesty; and I will likewise tell them one serious truth, that attracted by the amiable appearance of modesty, I have heard gentlemen declare, they have discovered great beauty, where they otherwise would not have searched for it.

As soon as Mrs. Flutter had left the apartment, Portia turning to Cornelia, said, I doubt not but this lady's behaviour has occasioned you great speculation, as indeed it justly might; and tho' you have been before-hand with me in your reflexions on her conduct in general, yet I must beg leave to make a few remarks on some particulars; and the rather, as it is possible they may hereafter be of service to you; and, first, if fate allots you to a happy marriage, make the blessing permanent by love, and the constant practice of all the female virtues; if, on the contrary, you are unfortunately married, and your mind is torn and distracted with the agonies of domestic jars, seek relief from him, who alone can extricate us out of the deepest distress: if you love your husband passionately, as was my own case, and he but ill return your tenderness; let mildness, complaisance, and a blameless conduct be the only arms that you combat

combat his ill humour with; for a contrary method will only irritate him the more and, I am very positive, can never regain a heart liable to wandering; but, above all things, let not the badness of your husband's behaviour, or his particular ill usage of you, ever draw you into the least irregularity; so far from talking of your husband's faults yourself, I would have you shun all opportunities of hearing of them, and, as much as possible, be blind to them; for your discretion and silence will here be the most prevailing reproof; an affected ignorance is seldom a virtue, and yet in this case it would be a great one; and if your husband is a sensible man, he will see how unwilling you are to be uneasy; and there cannot be a stronger argument to persuade him not to be unjust to you; nay, it is highly probable, your example may in time teach him to correct all his irregular passions, and at last entirely convert him; and surely there is nothing so glorious to a wife as a victory so gained; for a man, reclaimed from any bad habits in this manner, will ever after be subjected to her virtue, and the wife's patience, for a time, is rewarded by a triumph that will continue as long her life: I have always thought, that a wife never appeared in a more truly ridiculous light, than when she made her husband's faults or follies the

subject of her conversation; one would imagine, such women expected the town should rise up in arms to take their parts; but the consequence always is, that they are brought up in all companies as the reigning jest, and continue so till some newer folly comes upon the Stage to their relief.

I make no doubt, Cornelia, continued Portia, but you see all the errors of Mrs. Flutter's conduct in regard to her daughter; and, in case heaven should ever see fit to bless you with a family, I shall take leave to say something on that subject to you.

First then, a woman's tenderness to her children is one of the most sincere evidences of her virtue; but yet I would have the manner of expressing this affection subject to the rules of good breeding; and though a woman of fashion ought not to be less kind to them than mothers of the lowest rank in life are to theirs, yet she must distinguish herself in the manner, and avoid the ordinary methods; you must begin early to make your children love you, that they may obey you: to be displeased for their own good, is a maxim young people are very slow in understanding; so that you are always to conclude, that the thoughts of your children have no small mixture of mutiny in them, which,
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being natural, you must not be angry at, because that will increase it; when you cannot avoid chiding, do it gently; but, if it is possible, rather flatter away their ill humour, and take the first opportunity, after this, of pleasing them in something that they did not expect; this will strengthen your authority, by making it soft, and confirm their obedience, by making it their interest; above all things, never be in a passion, either with or before your children, for this is giving them a licence to do the same; you must therefore keep as strict a guard upon yourself before your children as if you was amongst your enemies; for all children have a shortness of thought, owing to the weakness of their judgments, and are very apt to make wrong inferences of what you say; and by this means they lessen their duty to you, and extend their liberty farther than is convenient to themselves; let them therefore stand more in awe of your affection than of your power: in one word, I give it you as my opinion, that you are to act by your children as by your husband; let your behaviour be such to him, that he may not only have the greatest affection to your person, but that he may esteem you as his first friend, and prefer you before any other relation or acquaintance he

has in the whole world. I have dwelt the longer on this subject, as it appears by the conduct of the ladies of the present age, that they have entirely given up the pleasing employment of forming the infant minds of their children : but, notwithstanding the force of fashion, this is undoubtedly a duty incumbent on every mother, and much more so than that of forming and adorning their bodies; as to this last particular indeed we do not seem to be wanting, if we are to judge by the great increase of these female seminaries amongst us now called boarding-schools, where, for only treble the interest of the daughter's fortune, the mother is at once delivered from all trouble, till the young lady's understanding is arrived at a pitch capable of attaining the instructions of that profound master in the stupendous science of whist, the ever-memorable Mr. Hoyle; and indeed, in the age we now live in, which will undoubtedly be recorded in the annals of fame for wisdom, it is not to be wondered at that this should happen early in life, and that a young lady, if she gives a strict application to the instructions of this wonderful and truly great master, should, after three or four years, and that too at an age when our grandmothers would have thought her only fit to be reading her testament,

ment, be thoroughly accomplished, and the whole plan of her education, by the assistance of this useful man, so entirely finished, that she will be capable of acquitting herself properly in what is commonly called the best company in England.

I must beg your patience, my dear Cornelia, a little longer, said Portia, as there is one very material part in Mrs. Flutter's character that I have not yet touched, I mean her want of oeconomy, and her total neglect of the care of her family; a woman that is guilty of these faults brings herself under a censure much heavier than the trouble she would avoid; and indeed, such a woman is rather an incumbrance than a help to any family she is at the head of: this I am very sure of, that no respect is lasting, but that which is produced by our being in some measure useful to those that pay it; and upon this principle, even the regard of the children and servants will not be paid to a lady who thinks them below her notice, and not worth her care: do you therefore, my dear Cornelia, be very careful, that you do not carry your politeness to that height, nor practice the present fashion to that degree, as to be good for nothing: a gentleman's province is certainly without doors, and the oeconomy of a house is in some measure there-
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fore indecent for him, which makes this duty fall wholly upon the wife ; and yet the art of laying out money wisely is not attained, I assure you, without a great deal of thought ; and this is more difficult still in the case of a married woman, who is accountable to her lord and master for all her mistakes, in this particular ; for it is not only his money, but his character too is at stake, if what comes under his lady's care is managed improperly ; your husband's temper then must here be your chief direction ; when once you know his mind, it will justify your part in the management ; if he is pleased with it, you may be quite easy, for he is your guarantee to the world.

In regard to your own dress and appearance, which is an article of great expence, generally speaking, among the ladies, take this for a maxim, that nothing is truly fine but what is fit and proper for your circumstances ; for if once you break thro' this rule, you will launch into a wide sea of extravagance ; every thing will become necessary, only because you have a mind to it ; but remember the proverb, that children and fools want every thing, because they want sense to distinguish ; and there cannot be a stronger evidence of a weak understanding, than the making too large a cata-

catalogue of things that are necessary ; when, upon a strict examination, it will be found, there are but few things that come under that denomination ; and I am very certain, that, in this great town, there is more money given to be laughed at, than for any one thing in the world ; though I am as certain the purchasers do not think so ; for, I do assure you, the world is the most favourable to us, when we acquit ourselves in that manner which is most agreeable to our stations in it. Mrs. Flutter's great argument upon this subject always was, she must be like other people : if you once indulge this notion, it will carry you a great way ; never mind the wants that vanity alone creates ; no, my Cornelia, I would inspire you with a nobler ambition ; allow no body to practice all the great virtues in a higher degree than yourself ; for be assured, that poorness of mind is worse than poverty of fortune ; be always therefore sensible of the necessity of virtue ; good sense, Cornelia, is a glaring equipage, if you chuse to make a figure ; and great virtue the most shining ornament you can possibly wear ; the only point that I think a woman can distinguish herself in to any advantage is oeconomy : it would indeed have been happy, if Mrs. Flutter's fortune had been such, as to make all computations
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of her income unnecessary; but as I believe hers is not large, so it is incumbent on her, by all means, to be discreet in the article of expence; for where people do not observe a moderation in this particular, they will soon see their affairs in disorder; indeed, where œconomy is once laid aside, you can answer for nothing: not that I would have you, my Cornelia, covetous; and though I recommend regularity, I am a professed enemy to avarice, which is of little use, and dishonours all persons, brings them into contempt, and makes them despised: all that I aim at, is to persuade you to such a management and regularity, as will avoid the shame and injustice which always attends a careless conduct; let you make yourself ever so fine, gay, and glittering, I do assure you, Cornelia, you will find yourself often exceeded by your inferiors; therefore I would advise, that in your house you might have every thing elegantly useful, which, with a full attendance, is not so easily imitated by people below you.

Hortensius then spoke, and said, that he knew few things more truly ridiculous, than the vanity of appearing greater than we are, and which, said he, is always attended with fatal consequences at last, and in the interim makes our lives wretchedly uneasy,
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and never answers our designs; for we have as many people who calculate our estates or fortunes with our expences, as we have acquaintance; the world sees through us; and, instead of paying us the respect which we endeavour to purchase by our ruin, we only furnish matter for ridicule, and make ourselves the jest of all who know us; and thus we lavish our estates to deceive ourselves: it has been the endeavour of wise men in all ages, continued Hortensius, to retrench the evils of life; but it is the custom of fools to increase them. Arspacia then said, Cornelia, you know Brilante: last birth-day she appeared at court in a rich gold brocade suit of cloaths; and she vainly imagined, that all who took notice of her dress admired her fancy, and conceived very advantageous ideas of her fortune; when, in reality, they remarked her only for an idle, extravagant foolish young woman, in the high road to ruin and beggary; she was therefore laughed at by the ill-natured, and pitied by the more humane: this lady, said she, is always a slave to the present mode, be it what it will; and indeed the generality of the ladies of the present age are in such a state of bondage, that I have often thought, that if they had been formed by nature, what they ridiculously make themselves

selves by art and fashion, they would look upon themselves as the most wretched of all created beings. Arspacia here was obliged to stop; for at this moment entered two ladies, whom I shall call Lisetta and Flavia: Lisetta was the daughter of a country gentleman, who lived in the neighbourhood of Hortensius; she would have been little remarked, had it not been for Flavia, into whose acquaintance she fell when she was very young; Flavia was of low birth, she wanted not sense, and she had a kind of native cunning which was of infinite use to her, as it supplied the place of wisdom; she had, by some fortunate accidents, been thrown early in life into good company, which opportunity she had improved; and the same lucky events, by which she had at first emerged out of darkness, still attending her, she was at this time possessed of an easy fortune, which she daily increased, and which by birth she had no title to.

Flavia had once been very handsome; but was now more than young; the cruelty that had taken possession of her heart in her bloom, was by time hardened into a stoical severity against the male part of the creation; she therefore entered herself a member of the society of female friends, a sect now much in vogue amongst us; and

and here indeed she had an opportunity of exerting her talents to the utmost; for one of their tenets is, as I have been informed, never to suffer a friend to marry, except for interest only, that the wife may be the better enabled to continue and increase her favours to her female friend, who still holds the first place in her heart: in pursuance of this truly laudable scheme, Flavia had been long hunting down an old baronet for her dear friend Lisetta; though he had hitherto escaped her toils. All ladies of this order of female friends are perfect Platos in petticoats; for they are not sufficiently qualified to be admitted into the society, except their philosophy is great enough to make them despise all innocent diversions: they look down upon the stage as affording nothing worthy of their attention; and though they go oftener to the theatre than other people, yet it is purely to oblige their acquaintance, and contrary to their inclination: another of their tenets, which they religiously hold, is to lay all their particular friends under contribution, which they effectually perform by artfully applying oil of fool, of which indeed they are very liberal. As it is possible some of my fair readers may really be strangers to this wonder-working oil; though I am pretty confident, those that
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are not so will pretend ignorance; however, for the benefit of the former, I shall acquaint them, that the principal ingredients are, gross flattery, mixed up with syrup of civility, some acid spirit of scandal, and a great deal of the tincture of self-love: by the right application of this composition these female friends are enabled to live in an elegant manner, often indeed superior to their patroness who bestows the favours: but it would be tiresome to my readers to enter into a particular detail of all the arts practised by these people; and besides, I am myself a stranger to many of them; so shall only say, Flavia was soon sensible, that she had got into very improper company; for her talents did not here appear to any advantage; she therefore reminded Lisetta, in a very polite manner, that they had a vast number of visits to make, and by this means obliged her instantly to take her leave.

As soon as these ladies had left the apartment, Portia said, I have before, Cornelia, warned you against particular friendships, as they are, you see, sometimes very dangerous, and always extremely ridiculous: but, that I may not be thought too severe, I will give you my reasons: it is very possible you may fix upon a lady for your friend, against whom the world has

has given judgment for some great fault; without your being acquainted with it; a resemblance of inclination is none of the least inducements to friendship; and you will be looked upon at least as a well-wisher, if not a partner with her in her faults; for you will not find the world so very good-natured, as to believe you averse to her way of thinking, since it did not discourage you from admitting her to an intimacy; your ignorance of the lady's true character may lessen the guilt, but will most certainly improve the jest upon you: do not then lay out your friendship too lavishly; for you are responsible to the world, if you pitch upon a lady for your friend that is improper to be called so: another thing that I would recommend to you is, never to carry your friendship so far to your dear friend, as absolutely to lose your sight because she is concerned: I confess malice is too quick-sighted; but it doth not therefore follow that friendship must be blind; and if you do not observe a mean between these two extremes, your excess of good-nature will betray you into a very ridiculous figure; the best of these female friendships are not without their objections; but as it is impossible for you not to have acquaintance, I would recommend it to you to make choice of such

people as are remarkable for good sense, and great virtue; if you neglect doing this, your reputation may be hurt by their impertinence; I am speaking now only of acquaintance, not of friends; but this will shew you how difficult a thing it is to meet with a true friend: I do not pretend to make a dissertation on the subject, I only touch slightly on some duties of civil life; I refer you to your own heart, which will put you, I doubt not, upon acquiring all the virtues which will merit a sincere friend; and then I shall beg of heaven to enrich you with that treasure: you observed, Cornelia, continued Portia, I believe, the distinction that the ladies made to each other that have just left us; and the same you saw in Mrs. Flutter and Mrs. Allgood; this gives offence to the rest of their acquaintance, because it is injuring them in some degree by setting them at a distance, whilst the dear friend only is to be caressed: people, I assure you, very seldom forget such treatment, therefore if ever formality is allowable, it is to be assumed here, that you may resist the invasion of such forward women, as would press into your friendship and acquaintance, where, if once admitted, they will either be a snare or an incumbrance to you: here Portia ended; and there then came in a lady, who, by the impru-

imprudence of her conduct had given room for censure, though she was believed to be strictly innocent ; Hortensius then observed to Cornelia, that it was absolutely necessary for every woman to make her life virtuous, and her conduct prudent ; living well, said he, does not silence calumny, but it certainly disarms it ; and, I believe, indiscretion very often in women goes as far to give a scope for scandal, as real infamy ; for the world judges from the public behaviour of you ladies, while they are ignorant of your private conduct and sentiments. You are therefore very happy, Cornelia, continued Hortensius, to have an opportunity of being a witness of the failings of other people, without erring yourself, and by that means make their ill example serve as a preservative to your discretion.

Hortensius had hardly finished his last sentence, when there came in Mrs. Sable, and her daughter Vergetta ; Mrs. Sable was the daughter of one of the meanest mechanics ; who, by raking, scraping, and denying himself the necessaries of life, amassed a fortune, that purchased his daughter a husband of a genteel profession ; they had no other child but Vergetta, her intellects were by nature weak, she was proud, haughty, and imperious ;
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and as they gave her a fashionable education, so her understanding was not improved, nor her passions corrected; she looked down upon her equals in fortune, for as to birth she did not even condescend to think of them; she never was handsome, and was now pretty far advanced in life, but had just met with a necessitous man of quality, who, with a shattered constitution, had, for the sake of her fortune only, bestowed a title on her. But, as Pope says,

What can enoble fots, or slaves, or
cowards ?

Alas! — not all the blood of all the
Howards.

This mushroom lady, with the magnificent Mrs. Sable, was the standing subject for contempt and ridicule. Mrs. Sable had entirely forgot her original, and was perpetually crowding herself into the company of people of quality, where she was sure to be laughed at. Her ladyship's title indeed had deprived her both of sight and memory, but it had not the same effect upon the company she now was permitted to keep, who saw the mean mechanic in every action. Her ladyship had her female friend, who, as

she came from the dregs of the people, over acted her part, which she thought was being polite; but it was believed his lordship would soon put an end to the farce.

But it is high time to present my readers with the character of Mrs. Surface; which I promised to give. Mrs. Surface was the daughter of a country gentleman, but was now married to a dignitary of the law; her husband, a man of the greatest merit, and an old particular friend of Portia's. As this gentleman had always spoke of Portia, not only with admiration, but with a degree of veneration; so it excited a desire in his lady to be acquainted with so valuable a woman, not doubting but Portia was a profound metaphysician; but how great was Mrs. Surface's surprize, upon her addressing herself to Portia in the stile of a metaphysician, to hear her declare she was an entire stranger to the science. She then beheld her with a smile of contempt, and it is to be feared her husband fell greatly in her esteem, who could rank such an illiterate creature in the list of sensible women; however, hoping to find greater encouragement from the gentlemen, she turned to them, and began to talk upon the same subject; as they did not pay her

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all the attention she thought she merited ; so she changed the form of her attack, and spoke to them in Greek. There was one among them who happened to be master of the language, and he very artfully flattered her vanity, and at the same time diverted the company at her expence ; which, with all her profound learning, she wanted sense to discover ; at last, one of the gentlemen asked her in plain English, her opinion of Mr. Locke ; to which she answered, he knew nothing of the subject he pretended to write upon.

For, in the first place, she could clearly demonstrate, that his doctrine against innate ideas was absolutely erroneous and false ; and that the reasons by which he attempts to prove, that privative causes can produce positive ideas in the mind, are equally trifling and absurd.

And, in regard to the material difference there is between meditative and contemplative thought, he had shewn himself wholly incapable of illustrating that matter to the satisfaction of the learned world ; and therefore, in her opinion, he was no metaphysician.

This answer made the gentleman smile, but he could not forbear replying, with some warmth, that no person had ever treated the whole subject so clearly as Mr.

Locke

Locke had done; and that he was, without dispute, the greatest man in that science, this nation, or, he believed, any other had ever produced. This debate now ran high, Mrs. Surface was single in her opinion, and the gentlemen were all unanimous; as she found she could not convince them, she was determined to silence them; which she effectually did, by assuring them, she had now a book in the press, that would put the truth of what she had been asserting, out of all dispute; for she had there confuted Mr. Locke in every one of his propositions, and indeed proved him a mere fool; for she could say, without vanity, that no person understood the science of metaphysicks so well as herself; and she hoped to see it more generally studied by the ladies, for it was not only a great embellishment to a female mind, but of much more use than arithmetic, which was proper only for the vulgar, for it was below the attention of a woman of fashion to study the properties and powers of numbers and numerical quantities; and to be what was called a good accomptant, she thought a great reflection on any lady, as it was a qualification fit only for her servant; she said, the work she had been engaged in, had cost her an infinite deal of trouble and

time, but it would be of general utility to mankind, as it would shew them, that Mr. Locke knew nothing of the matter ; and she should have the glory of opening their eyes, by letting all the world see the error they had hitherto been in ; and she doubted not, but succeeding ages would revere her name ; for, though France had long boasted of their Madame Dacier, England, now to her honour, had a Surface, whose fame would be immortal ; and, who was as much superior to that vain impertinent French woman, as that proud Gallican critick had been to the rest of her ignorant sex. After this rhapsody of nonsense she looked contemptibly upon the ladies, but took leave of the gentlemen more politely ; then hurrying to her coach, ordered it to drive to her printer's, that she might hasten the publication of her voluminous composition of folly.

As this lady's absurdity afforded the company a great deal of mirth, so I think it is necessary to acquaint my readers, that Mrs. Surface had, from her infancy, a natural vivacity with a lively imagination ; this was mistaken by the small circle of her friends for wit ; and as this flattered the vanity of a young mind, which is always apt to be elated upon the most trifling

ling excellencies ; she would not rest here, but was fired with an ambition to be thought a learned woman ; she therefore became mistress, as she called it, of the Latin and Greek languages, which she learned like a parrot ; the consequence of this was, she read all day long authors she did not understand, till at last, like Don Quixote, she fancied herself equal, if not superior to the greatest genius's of the age. This behaviour gave her husband infinite concern, but alas, it was not in his power to prevent it, except he had confined her ; she took pains to expose herself in a particular manner always before company, and once when an archbishop dined with Mr. Surface, she attacked his lordship so warmly upon the beloved science of metaphysics, that his grace, in his own defence, was forced to make a dissertation on a jelly, to deliver himself from the torrent of her folly and impertinence.

Arspacia was the first that spoke after Mrs. Surface had left the company ; she said, it was a very judicious observation of the duke de Rochefoucault, that we never appear ridiculous from our real, but from our affected characters ; for this reason, said she, a woman should always consider her own genius, and never let her vanity get the better of her judgment ; for a wo-

man that is neither a wit nor a scholar, may yet have an useful understanding; and if she contents herself with seeming what she really is, if she doth not procure applause, she will at least avoid the imputation of impertinence.

To which Hortensius answered, that to prevent people mistaking their talents, he would recommend one maxim, which he wished to see practised by both sexes, which was only this; that they would have more ambition to shew the world, they had good hearts and just principles, than good heads, great learning, or fine genius; for it is not given to every person to excel in wit, humour, or a fine and elegant taste in learning, but it is in every body's power to have virtue and honesty; without these, all other accomplishments are vain; and with these, without any other accomplishments, we should be honoured with the love and esteem of mankind in general.

Portia then addressing herself to Cornelia, said, moderate your fondness, my dear Cornelia, for extraordinary sciences; they are very dangerous for a woman, and will teach you nothing, but a vast deal of vanity; guard yourself, therefore, against the inclination of setting up for a learned woman; you have all the knowledge that
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is necessary for your well-being; therefore do not run after things that were not designed for you; but employ your time innocently, virtuously, and usefully: before people engage in enquiries that are above their capacities, I think they ought to know the just extent of their own understandings, and what rule they have for determining this grand point; and yet this is a thing every body is ignorant of: do you therefore have courage enough not to desire to know what really surpasses your understanding; by thus suppressing a restless and useless curiosity, you will prevent a vain opinion of yourself, and abate a confidence in your own sense.

Know thyself, was a sentence of advice which the ancients held in the highest veneration; the precept is short indeed, but very full of instruction, both moral and divine; for whoever know themselves, will reflect from whence they came, and consequently adore and praise that power that gave them being: it will likewise lead them on to a consideration of the relation wherein they stand, and what they owe to all mankind: it will also teach them what place they fill in the creation, and make them behave in such a manner, as is most suitable to their rank and dignity: so that it comprehends our duty to

God, our neighbour, and ourselves : and it is a thirst after this knowledge only that I recommend to you, my dear Cornelia ; for this will effectually destroy the seeds of pride, envy, cruelty, and impiety : but not to enter gravely into the subject, I shall only endeavour to shew you how the want of this most useful knowledge is the occasion of those follies, extravagancies, and absurdities we daily see, and which are always attended with ridicule and contempt.

It is the want of this knowledge that makes people act out of character, and mistake their talents, and then they commence ridiculous ; for what can be more so, than to find ladies writing volumes in folio upon metaphysics, and neglecting their families, and the education of their daughters ; what can possibly be more ridiculous, than to find gentlemen of rank and fortune associating themselves with gamblers, pickpockets, jockeys, and grooms ; or women, who pretend to virtue and reputation, continually at masquerades, card-tables, or any other place but at home ; who can forbear laughing at such gross absurdities as these. Here Portia ended ; and, as it was late, Hortensius and Arspacia took their leaves of Porcia and Cornelia, as they intended to set



set out next morning for their seat in the country ; and I will likewise relieve my readers from this tedious chapter.

C H A P. XI.

Portia gives Cornelia some instructions in regard to her conduct ; they go into the country ; the unexpected death of Hortensius, followed by that of Arspacia, and likewise the death of Portia ; Cornelia marries ; some account of Atticus and the blooming Clelia.

PORTIA and Cornelia saw Hortensius and Arspacia depart in the morning for their country-seat, which was about fourscore miles from London : it was much earlier in the season than people of their fashion generally quit the town ; but indeed their coming to London at all was, properly speaking, only to grow weary of it, and that they might renew in themselves the relish of a country life, of which they both were excessively fond ; for Hortensius and his lady were in possession of true happiness, which is of a retired nature ; they found in each other every thing they wanted, and could therefore receive no addition from multitudes of spectators ; Hortensius was Arspacia's bosom friend, and her chief companion in her solitude,

and was then as much the lover as when he first married her; they both abounded with good sense, consummate virtue, and a mutual esteem of each other, and were therefore a perpetual entertainment to one another: this picture of domestic happiness differs so much from what is practised in our days, that I fear many of my fair readers will consider it only as ideal; but I beg them to adorn themselves with the same virtues that Arspacia did, and then I doubt not but they will meet with a real Hortensius; but it is fashion now that generally governs the world; and there is a fashion in happiness, I am told, which I am certain is a false one; this sort of happiness loves crowds, and to draw the eyes of people upon them, because they cannot receive any applauses from their own breast, but it must all arise from the admiration of other people; this sort of happiness flourishes very much about the court, and in all publick assemblies, but loses its existence when it is not looked at; this is fashionable happiness; but, if they chuse to enjoy the real one, let them, like Arspacia, aspire after the virtues that are peculiar to their sex, follow their natural modesty, and think it their greatest commendation not to be talked of one way or the other.

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All strictness of behaviour is so unmercifully laughed at in our age, that the other much worse extreme is the more common folly; but I beg my fair countrywomen to ask themselves, which of these two offences a husband would the more easily forgive, that of her not being so entertaining to company, occasioned by her not having conversed so much in the gay world; or that of her behaving so fashionably as to raise the inclinations of the room to his disadvantage; and then she will easily be able to form her own conduct. I have often thought, we have carried womens characters too much into publick life, as ladies now affect a sort of fame; but I here cannot forbear telling them, that the utmost of a woman's character is contained in a domestick life; she is blameable or praise-worthy, according as her behaviour affects the house and family of her father, or her husband; all she has to do in this world is contained within the duties of a daughter, a sister, a wife, or a mother; and I think it very possible, that all these may be well performed, though a lady should not be the very finest woman at an opera, or the very best whist-player in the whole kingdom; these duties are very consistent with a moderate share of common sense, a clean but

plain dress, and a decent behaviour: at present the heads of my fair countrywomen are turned the wrong way; for they place their ambition on circumstances, where to excel is no addition to what is truly commendable and praise-worthy: I believe indeed that beauty imposes on the person that has it, and quite infatuates the mind; but let my readers remember, that there is but a very small number of years difference between a fine woman and one that is no longer so; for few things are shorter than the reign of beauty; and nothing is more melancholy than the latter part of the lives of women, who never knew any thing but that they were handsome.

Let me therefore earnestly beg of all my fair readers, to endeavour to have an amiable merit, by joining the graces to the virtues; for a valuable woman exerts the manly virtues of friendship, probity, and honour, by the punctual discharge of all her obligations: I do not confine the merit of women; no; I give them a much larger extent than they generally give themselves; for I would have my fair countrywomen not only to have the exterior graces, but all the virtues of the heart, and all the fine sentiments that their minds are capable of receiving by acquiring a solid merit;
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I would have them consider themselves as an additional part of the human species; and this would direct their ambition to excel to the right place; for they would then in no part of their lives want opportunities of being shining ornaments to their fathers, their husbands, their brothers, or their own children.

But I beg pardon of those of my fair readers who dislike this digression, perhaps both for the length and the subject: all that I presume to offer in my own defence is, that I have treated them like a true friend; for I have ventured to disoblige them for their own good.

But I now return to my history; and am to acquaint my readers, that Portia and Cornelia were to have gone out of town with Hortensius and his lady; but Portia had some unexpected business that called for her immediate attendance; they were therefore obliged to defer their journey for a fortnight, and then purposed following Hortensius and Arspacia, and intended staying with them four or five months. Hortensius and his lady had now been gone ten days, and Portia had not heard from them, which gave both her and Cornelia great anxiety; Portia therefore desired Cornelia to write to Arspacia that post, and to inform her, that
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in three days they intended to set out for Hortensius's seat: this command she joyfully obeyed; and, as the morning was fine, Portia purposed taking a walk till dinner-time: as Portia's coach drove on, Cornelia observed to her the vast numbers of poor that crouded the streets; and said, she thought it a great misfortune that it was so very difficult to distinguish the real objects from the counterfeit; to which Portia answered, her observation was just; for it was almost impossible to make that very necessary distinction; and yet, said she, it is the safer way of the two to be imposed on, than to overlook one real object: this great fault, continued Portia, is wholly owing to the carelessness of our legislators, whose business it is to punish counterfeits, and justly to apply the large sums of money gathered for the relief of worthy objects: but, continued Portia, it gives me a real pleasure to see that tenderness of disposition in you, Cornelia; for compassion towards the distressed is a most amiable quality: I wish, said she, that all persons of fortune would retrench a little from their unnecessary expences, I mean those only, said Portia, which come under the article of pleasure, that they might be the better enabled to afford such as charity engages all people to; surely humanity makes

makes us feel the necessity of assisting our fellow-creatures; and good-natured generous tempers are more sensible of the obligations that lie upon them to do good, than they are of all the other necessities of life: your natural disposition, Cornelia, continued Portia, inclines me to believe you will, when you are at the head of a family, treat your servants with kindness and humanity: the impatience and heat of youth, joined to the false notions that they have imbibed of themselves, makes some ladies look upon their servants as creatures of a different species; but I am very certain I have no occasion to tell you, that this is contrary to the sentiments you owe yourself, and to the humanity you owe to all the world: we ought indeed to consider our servants as unhappy friends; for the vast difference between us and them is not their fault, nor our merits, but a particular direction of the divine providence; therefore never make them uneasy in their state of life, nor add weight to the trouble of it, there is nothing so poor and mean as to be proud and haughty to any body in your service: never use any harsh language to them; indeed it ought not to come out of the mouth of a well-bred, polite woman: as servitude is settled in opposition to the natural equality of mankind,

it

it becomes us to soften it: never be in a passion with your servants; for by doing this you expose yourself to them; and lessen your right of reprimanding them, by letting them see your faults: you must keep up an authority in your family; but it should be a mild authority: you should not always threaten without punishing, for fear of bringing your threats into contempt; but yet even this should not be done till persuasion has failed; for you must always remember, that humanity and christianity put all the world on the same foot, and you owe them assistance, advice, and bounties suitable to their condition and wants: never encourage the flattery of your servants; and, to prevent any impression of this kind, consider you pay these people to serve your weakness and your pride. By the time this conversation was finished, Portia and Cornelia were got to the park, and were met by three young ladies of Cornelia's acquaintance, who asked her to be of their party that night to the opera: to this question Cornelia very politely answered in the negative; they then said, with a loud laugh, that she was a stupid creature, that could resist such an enchanting entertainment; for their own parts, they had not missed going to the opera a single night all the season;

season; and yet they could not recollect they had seen Cornelia there more than twice: Cornelia said, this was very true; and, what would more surprize them, she would inform them, that she was just going out of town: at this they all started, shrugged up their shoulders, and said, if she was serious, they pitied her; for their own parts, they could not breathe in the country so early in the year; when the town was empty indeed, it was changing the scene, and so was tolerable for a very little while; but, if she must go, begged she would take a large quantity of hartshorn with her; for they were very sure she would want it, as they knew by experience, that every body must be very ill if they were alone; after this good-natured advice, they very obligingly took their leaves: Portia then said, she believed these ladies would not make very valuable wives; but indeed no sensible man would ever put them to the trial: it appears to me, continued Portia, that these ladies have mistaken their interest; for, by so constantly being in publick, they will wear out the taste of the town by shewing themselves continually; and as there is one among them that seems to want graces to set her off to advantage, I think, said she, she ought to be more reserved; there is no honour or dignity,

dignity, Cornelia, I assure you, in a woman's shewing herself continually; nor is it an easy matter to preserve a strict modesty in a constant hurry of diversions; besides, the use lessens the relish of them; if you would have your pleasures and amusements last, use them only as diversions to relieve you after more serious occupations; entertain yourself often with your own reason and reflections, and the absence of pleasures will not leave you any time upon your hands, nor any desires after them: these ladies carried their raillery a great way; but exposed only themselves; for, as the inimitable doctor Young says,

O! lost to virtue, lost to manly thought,
 Lost to the noble sallies of the soul,
 Who think it solitude to be alone.

A life of levity, my dear Cornelia, is a life of guilt; a serious mind is the native soil of every virtue, and the single character that does true honour to human nature: your acquaintance are in the wrong, that reproach you with being too fond of solitude; for it is absolutely necessary, to weaken the impression that sensible objects are apt to make upon a young mind: be assured, from my experience, that the greatest science is to know how to be independent; secure yourself therefore a place
 of

of refuge in your own breast; you can always return thither, and are sure of being welcome; but when you do not, by some solid reflections, place your dependance on yourself, you must be unhappy; you will find the sense of all pleasures wear off as soon as you grow habituated to them; and you will likewise find, that when the world is not necessary to your happiness, that it will have no power over you: a wise woman never runs after felicity, but makes her own happiness; for it is always in her own power: lay down this for a maxim, with a resolution to determine your conduct by, that true happiness consists in peace of mind, in the use of your reason, and in the discharge of your several duties; never therefore fancy yourself happy, till you feel your pleasures of this sort flow from the bottom of your heart.

Here Portia ended; and, as it grew late, they hastened to her coach to return home; when they arrived there, they found a messenger waiting from Arspacia, who had come post to acquaint them, that two days after Hortensius had got into the country, as he was riding, his horse took fright, had thrown his master, and had broke his leg in two places, the agony of which had thrown Hortensius into a violent fever, and that he feared there were small hopes
of

of his master's life; that his lady was in the utmost affliction, and begged Portia and Cornelia to come to her as soon as possible.

Portia immediately ordered her equipage to be got ready; and, after taking a slight refreshment, herself and Cornelia set out in the afternoon of the same day for Hortensius's seat; but dispatched a servant before them to acquaint Arspacia with their coming: they travelled with all the expedition in their power, yet could not arrive there till the morning of the third day after they had left London: they found the whole family in the utmost affliction; for Hortensius had expired about two hours before they got there: the surgeons, it seems, at first feared a mortification; and though nothing was omitted that could possibly prevent it, yet the fourth day it took place, and proved fatal to him. He was universally lamented; for no man could be more beloved, and truly esteemed by all that knew him: his estate, which was very large, was entailed; and, as he had no son, went to the heir at law; but Arspacia had a jointure of it, of fifteen hundred pounds a year: his will had been made some time; and Arspacia was left sole executrix, and guardian to their only daughter, who had a fortune of thirty thousand pounds. It

It would make too melancholy an impression on my readers, were I to attempt to describe the scenes they beheld in this family; but Portia and Cornelia hastened to Arspacia's room, they found her confined to her bed with a fever, contracted by the fatigue of body and anxiety of mind she had undergone upon Hortensius's account.

The young and innocent Clelia was playing by the bed-side, quite insensible of the irreparable loss she had sustained, and happy indeed in that insensibility; and even the sight of this much beloved infant now increased poor Arspacia's affliction, so that Portia ordered her to be removed.

Arspacia was truly an object of pity, for she was the picture of human woe; how was her mind tortured with the absence of what it loved, and now it was forever lost to her; what excursions did her soul make in imagination after it, and then turn into itself again, more foolishly fond and dejected at the disappointment. Her grief, instead of having recourse to reason, which would restrain it, seemed only to search for further nourishment; it called upon memory to represent the voice, the words, the looks, the temper; and affection of the deceased Hortensius.

The sight of the miserable Arspacia;
brought to Cornelia's mind these beautiful lines of Doctor Young's.

O! the soft commerce :—O! the tender
ties,

Close twisted with the fibres of the heart ;
Which, broken, break them; — and drain
off the soul

Of human joy,—and make it pain to live,
And is it then pain to live — when such
friends part?

'Tis the survivor dies. — My heart, no
more.

Portia was certainly the properest person in the world, upon such an occasion ; and she exhausted her whole stock of eloquence, in endeavouring to sooth Arspacia's mind to peace, for there was not one argument, moral, or divine, she did not make use of. Portia ordered a bed to be put up in Arspacia's dressing-room, that she might night and day be always ready to assist her unhappy friend.

Portia would say to Arspacia, I beg you, my much beloved friend, to moderate your grief ; lay before you the wisdom of your Maker, and the relation you stand in to him, the hidden ways and goodness of his providence, and the right which he has to impose

Impose a discipline upon us in the way of probation ; if once you do this, you will find that an immoderate sorrow, let the loss be what it will, how much less then, when it is only the common fate of all mankind ; is in no sense consistent with your duty to God.

You ought, Arspacia, to submit to him as the wisest and best of Beings ; and absolutely to depend upon his care and providence, as the governor of the world. This is that temper of mind which is most particularly suitable to the state we are passing through, and there can be no love of such a Being as God is without it.

We know, that we derive every thing which we enjoy in this life from his essential goodness ; we know, that he has a power to do what he pleases ; but we likewise know, that he is a Being of the most absolute benevolence, who delights in doing good to all his creatures without exception ; and what is the conclusion that is to be drawn from hence, but that we should refer ourselves entirely and implicitly to him, and place all our trust and confidence in his goodness ; think that you are his creature, and can claim nothing from him ; and that your being is an act of his free-will and mercy ; do not therefore complain of your affliction,
which

which he has ordered ; dare not to find fault with his administration.

No, this is an excess of pride and folly, which your heart, Arspacia, will never comply with.

Let me beseech you, therefore, not to give yourself up to such an extravagance of grief, which will shorten a life that is extremely valued by all your friends, and which will be very useful to your daughter, who will have many demands upon you, for the duties and services you owe her as a parent.

Re-assume then, my dear Arspacia, your wonted greatness of mind, for true piety, I assure you, consists in submitting to, and not contending against the will of heaven ; this method will bring you present peace and future glory.

With such conversations as these, Portia in some measure calmed the distracted bosom of the lost, but gentle Arspacia ; alas, her delicate frame was too weak to support the shock she had received by the death of Hortensius ; not but her fever abated, and she quitted her bed, but continued so weak and emaciated, that she appeared but as the shade of the once sprightly and engaging Arspacia.

Portia found her strength so totally decayed, that it was impossible to move Arspacia.

spacia to London ; and though she had two of the most eminent physicians that part of the world afforded, who had constantly attended her, yet Portia sent to a great distance to fetch a third, who was said to be the very *Æsculapius* of the age. After a very long consultation, which Portia waited with the utmost impatience, they declared, they neither had, nor would neglect any thing, that could contribute to establish Arspacia's health ; but said it was a very dangerous case, and made use of so many technical terms, and talked in such an unintelligible jargon, that a less sagacious person than Portia would have been at a loss to have known their meaning ; but she discovered, too soon for her peace of mind, notwithstanding their artful disguise, that it was not in the power of medicine to relieve Arspacia, for she was in, what is commonly called, a galloping consumption. This Portia communicated to Cornelia, and the melancholy account gave her the utmost affliction.

Portia thought it absolutely necessary to acquaint Arspacia of her danger, which she did in the softest manner imaginable ; the fair mourner received this account with pleasure, a gleam of joy spread it self over her whole countenance ; and she said,

then I shall soon be united again to my much loved Hortensius, never more to part.

Arspacia immediately made her will, and left the guardianship of her daughter Clelia to Portia; and in case of her death before Clelia was of age, then the whole trust to devolve on Cornelia.

Arspacia languished on for between four or five months after this; at the end of which she was made happy. Portia and Cornelia stayed to pay the last friendly offices to her memory; and then with the little Clelia all returned to London.

Portia had, for three months of the time she had been in the country, an ague, which at last, by the use of proper remedies, had left her, but had impaired her health so much, that she continued ill all the winter; and as the spring advanced, she apparently grew worse.

This greatly alarmed Cornelia; and upon her asking Portia's physician his opinion, he said, he feared there was small hopes of her life; for it was, though a gradual, yet he believed a total decay of nature.

Portia made no complaints, but suffered pain and sickness, with a fortitude that amazed Cornelia; but seeing Cornelia at last miserable and dejected beyond expression,

sion, for she could not disguise her grief so effectuaally from the penetrating eyes of Portia, but she discovered the real cause.

Portia then exhorted Cornelia in the strongest terms to resign her like a true christian philosopher, who had wisely considered; that all our enjoyments upon earth are but of short duration, telling her at the same time, that she hoped it would alleviate her affliction, to hear she could with pleasure look back on all the past actions of her life, and in the review find no gloomy ideas to darken the prospect of futurity.

Affuring Cornelia, her steady soul could meet the king of terrors with much more ease, than see her thus overwhelmed with grief; she then most earnestly conjured Cornelia to help her to support a final separation; for Portia, said she, had indeed most tenderly loved her.

Adding, I leave you the young Clelia, who now demands the care of a wise and indulgent friend, to lead her into the rugged paths of virtue, and form her infant mind to seek true happiness, and this I doubt not she will find in you; soon after uttering these words, she gently left the world, as if soft sleep had only closed her eyes; for as Dr. Young observes,

Whatever farce the boastful hero plays,
 Virtue alone has majesty in death;
 His God sustains him in his final hour.
 His final hour brings glory to his God;
 Man's glory, heaven vouchsafes to call
 her own.

We gaze, we weep, mix'd tears of grief
 and joy;
 Amazement strikes;—devotion bursts to
 flame;
 Christians adore;—and infidels believe.

But there is no describing the sorrow of Cornelia's almost broken heart upon this occasion; her situation was like *Telemachus's* when he had lost *Mentor*, for she was deprived both of the dearest and most valuable friend she had in the world; in *Portia*, Cornelia had found a treasure of true wisdom; and her excellent example and precepts had inspired her with a love of virtue, so that to *Portia*, Cornelia was indebted for every advantage she enjoyed, and she now had lost that much loved friend.

Her grief and affliction was excessive; *Portia* had left her her whole fortune it was true, but Cornelia had lost that balsam of life, a virtuous friend; and it is but too certain, that those agonies that have once invaded the mind, are very hard to
 be

be erased, and leave a heavy languor on the spirits. This was Cornelia's case for a long time ; the reason I take to be this ; that as the body is only endued with sensitive faculties, it can suffer no longer than it feels ; but the mind, of which memory is a part, cannot be wholly at rest, till reason, which, though slow, is always sure in its operations, exerts its power to chase all dark ideas thence ; but when we have once got the better of that melancholy, which past ills have left behind, and grow thankful for recovered peace ; we then are doubly happy, and enjoy the blessings with a much higher relish ; for we then look back with pleasure on the tempests we have escaped, and can reflect with calmness on a shipwrecked situation.

We then indeed begin to consider human life, as an uncertain ocean, where numberless nameless dangers wait beneath the fairest surface ; and are therefore, in some measure, prepared to meet disagreeable events.

The education of her beautiful orphan now began to engross all Cornelia's thoughts ; she endeavoured to instil into her tender mind, all the precepts and instructions that she herself had received from the most excellent Portia.

Clelia was blessed with an uncommon sweetness of disposition, and great docility, which is very necessary for a young person, who ought not to have much confidence in herself; Cornelia never trusted her from under her own eye, but was always present when she received her instructions from her several masters; she learned enough of grammar to enable her to speak, write, and read her mother tongue very correctly; and she is a most excellent accomptant, which is a part of education generally neglected in women, though nothing is more useful in every station of life; she is a perfect mistress of the French language, and she both draws and paints in water-colours extremely well; she dances very genteely; is quite easy and disengaged in her address, which is perfectly polite; she never seemed to like music, which Cornelia was not sorry for, as it gave her an opportunity of employing her time to more advantage, in more useful sciences. The cultivation of her mind has been Cornelia's chief concern; and as she has a most excellent understanding, so she has omitted nothing in her power to improve it.

In her person, Clelia is tall, very well shaped, and most exactly genteel; has very fine blue eyes, good teeth, fair hair,

hair, and a blooming complexion ; in short, she doth not want graces to render her extremely agreeable ; but she is not a beauty, except that her not knowing, or thinking herself handsome, may render her so in the eyes of the judicious.

The season of the year now approaching, when nature adorns all the earth in her gayest colours, Cornelia, with the young Clelia, quitted the noisy, dusty town, for fresh air and retirement.

Cornelia took a house at about a day's journey from London, in a most beautiful village ; the lord of the manor ; and indeed, the person from whom she rented her house, I shall call Atticus ; he was, at the time Cornelia took the house, abroad, and had been so for seven years ; making, as it is called, the grand tour. He returned to England a few months after Cornelia came to reside in the country, and very politely made her a visit.

I believe it will be necessary here to give an account of this gentleman ; his age was about thirty, with a clear estate of three thousand pounds a year, and an unexceptionable character ; as to his person, if the picture I shall give my readers falls short of their expectation, they must impute its faults to the unskilful hand that draws it ; for I assure them, there was

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none in the original. Suppose Atticus then introduced by the Graces, after they had adorned this their favourite in the most elegant manner, for nothing was wanting, that could possibly add a magnificence of dress, to the dignity of his air; not that I would have my readers imagine from hence that he had the least tincture of the English coxcomb, or French petite maitre; no, that was not the case, but I would only convey to them an idea, that Atticus appeared as a man of the first fashion.

He is of the middle size, and finely made, with a face so agreeable, that I may affirm, nature designed him to please; but this is nothing to the ease and gentleness which appears to heighten every thing about him, both in person and address; Atticus soon convinced Cornelia, he had a very fine understanding, and that nothing had been neglected that could improve it; and to this he joined a politeness very seldom to be met with.

Cornelia now believes, that Atticus soon found her heart was not to be trifled into love, nay, perhaps, he discovered this the very first visit he made her; and as he was thoroughly acquainted with our sex, he immediately formed a plan, which he most steadily pursued; his method was
very

very different from what is generally practiced ; but he thought it must be successful from the natural gravity of Cornelia's disposition.

It was this; he endeavoured with all his art, for two whole years, to gain Cornelia's esteem, and to lay hold of every opportunity to give her proofs of his; but he never once, in all that time, said a fine thing of her person; though all his conversation tended to gain her good opinion: Atticus's scheme was successful; for esteem is the result of reason, and to deserve it from good sense the height of human glory.

And I believe a sensible woman had rather a man of honour payed her that than all the homage of a sincere and humble love; for love often kindles from external merit only; but esteem arises from a much higher Source, the merit of the Soul.

Cornelia's astonishment was great, when Atticus declared himself her lover: she was pleased when she thought him her friend; but imagined that she had been determined never to enter into a state of life, where the very deserving Portia had met with such ill treatment; but, alas, how vain are the resolutions of a woman, who has once taught her heart to be pleased with a man of merit. Cornelia often raised

objections; and expressed her fears of being unhappy, and meeting with a Careless in Atticus; to all which he would answer in the words of a late ingenious author.

Our growing days increase of joy shall know,

And thick-sown comforts leave no room for woe;

Thou shalt strow sweets to soften life's rough way;

And when hot passions my proud wishes sway,

Thou, like some breeze, shall in my bosom play:

Thou, for protection, shall on me depend;

And I on thee for a soft faithful friend:

I, in Cornelia, shall for ever view

At once my care, my fear, my comfort too;

Thou shalt first partner in my pleasures be,

But all my pains shall last be known to thee.

But not to tire my readers; Atticus used his eloquence so effectually, and so thoroughly satisfied Cornelia of his generous sentiments, that at last she resigned her liberty; he now assures her, that he is convinced of her prudence, and he relies entirely upon her conduct, and likewise, with great politeness, tells her, that by it he in a great measure regulates his own; so that each circling now adds to their blifs.

C H A P.

C H A P. XII.

A character drawn by Clelia, with a description of Atticus's house, gardens, and manner of life; the character of Cleander; the conclusion of the whole.

BUT it is time now to return to the blooming Clelia: she was a child when Cornelia married, and, by the uncommon sweetness of her disposition, has engaged the affection of Atticus so much, that he now is as fond of her as if she was his own daughter; for that is a blessing denied him, Cornelia having no children: Clelia reverences Atticus with a kind of filial piety, and pays him all the regard that a well-disposed and grateful heart knows is always due to an indulgent parent.

This situation of two people so very deservedly dear to Cornelia, doth not a little contribute to her happiness. There is a young gentleman, whom I shall call Cleander, who often comes to Atticus's villa to spend a few days: his father has been dead some years, but was an intimate friend of Atticus's: he has occasionally made these visits ever since Atticus returned from Italy; but of late they have been more frequent, which made Atticus ob-

serve to Cornelia, that he believed these visits were to be placed to Clelia; though at this time Clelia was ignorant of any such design; but, as I have given my readers a description of the person of this beauteous maid, I think I ought in justice to be as particular in the more valuable part, her mind; and here indeed it is that Clelia shines; for the qualities of the heart are of the greatest concern in the commerce of life, as the understanding does not en-
 clear us to others; for we frequently see people very odious with great parts; they will give you a good opinion of themselves, though perhaps it is done by depressing you: this is no part of Clelia's character; for she is the joy of all her acquaintance, who are never so happy, as when they can get her to their houses to spend a few days; for she is always innocently cheerful.

A lady, whom I shall call Amelia, asked this favour of Cornelia the other day; and as Cornelia knew her to have an excellent good heart, joined to a great share of good sense, she consented, upon condition, that the whole time was not spent in pleasure and dissipation, but some hours assigned every day for reading and reflexion; and this she did, knowing there were some ladies at that time in the family, who were, as the poet says,

Idly

Idly busy, to no end employed.

Clelia is sensible that Cornelia has the highest and most tender regard for her; and she therefore constantly pays her the same duty that would have been due to the much-lamented Arspacia: Clelia is now just eighteen; and though no person has more the appearance of a woman of the first fashion than herself, yet her Sentiments of a fine lady's true character differ very widely from the generality of the world. When Clelia had left Cornelia six days, though her absence in all was not to exceed a fortnight, she wrote the following letter to her, and inclosed the character, and by that means let her know how she disposed of her time in a morning: and as it is said by the wise and learned, that people's private letters are the truest pictures of their minds, I shall therefore give Clelia's letter; and only make this one remark, that a young lady that thinks in the manner that Clelia does can hardly act wrong.

“ Honoured Madam,

“ **I** N a late conversation I had with
 “ you, we both joined in condemning
 “ the manners of the women of the present
 “ age;

“ age; where the foundation of the fault
 “ lies, or how to be amended, I do not
 “ take upon me to determine; only this
 “ I humbly offer, that if the ladies would
 “ be prevailed with to take their models
 “ more from antiquity, they would be less
 “ liable to err; and this we ought not to
 “ despair of, as antiques happen now to
 “ be the fashion; upon this presumption,
 “ Madam, I have taken leave to present
 “ you with an eastern lady; her habits, it
 “ is true, are not modern, but are ex-
 “ tremely becoming; and her ornaments,
 “ though perhaps not in taste, as the
 “ phrase now it, are, notwithstanding
 “ that, very valuable; and, as she is a
 “ foreigner, I have all the reason in the
 “ world to believe she will be well re-
 “ ceived: if, Madam, you shew the in-
 “ closed to Atticus, he will immediately
 “ find a great likeness between this foreign
 “ lady, and a woman that he prefers to
 “ all the world; though she herself will
 “ be the last person that sees the resem-
 “ blance.

“ You, Madam, that are so conversant
 “ in holy writ, will, at the first view dis-
 “ cover my theft; and, I doubt not, will
 “ approve my choice, as I am very sensi-
 “ ble, that you look upon the Old and New
 “ Testament be be the most valuable trea-
 “ sure you possess.

“ My

“ My reason for fixing on the proverbs
 “ of Solomon, to take my character of a
 “ true kind lady from is, that no man
 “ ever knew our sex so thoroughly as he
 “ did, as no man ever had had so many
 “ hundred wives as his majesty, and con-
 “ sequently could not have so many op-
 “ portunities of discerning the several foi-
 “ bles, follies, and weaknesses of the
 “ ladies as himself; to say nothing of his
 “ superior wisdom to all the rest of man-
 “ kind, as perhaps that would not be ad-
 “ mitted, I knowing several people who
 “ think themselves much wiser than So-
 “ lomon.

“ My attempting to draw this character
 “ is the strongest proof I can give you,
 “ Madam, that I do not neglect the com-
 “ mands you honoured me with when I
 “ left you.

“ But there is nothing more mortify-
 “ ing, than to write upon subjects that
 “ put me in mind of all my faults; and
 “ I now earnestly intreat you, Madam,
 “ that if you see any vices in me, incon-
 “ sistent with the virtues that I recommend;
 “ you will put me in a way to eradicate
 “ them; perhaps I have furnished you
 “ with arms against myself; use them
 “ freely, Madam, I beseech you; for I am
 “ very sensible, that you can teach me how

“ to subdue every unruly passion, as the
“ authority of your advice and precepts
“ is always supported by your own great
“ example.

“ These few reflections will, I hope,
“ be fresh engagements to me to exert
“ myself in the way of virtue; I fortify
“ my reason even against myself; for I
“ am now under a necessity of following
“ it, or else I expose myself to the shame
“ of having known it, and yet been false
“ to it: I do not forget a precept of yours,
“ Madam, which is, that other peoples
“ faults do not lessen ours, but ought
“ to serve as examples to deter us from
“ them; I therefore flatter myself, that
“ the force of fashion will have no influ-
“ ence on my conduct, as I shall never
“ chuse to be good and virtuous only by
“ comparision. Your great indulgence to
“ me all my life has encouraged me to
“ send you the few observations I enclose,
“ believing they will be received by
“ you, with that condescending goodness
“ you practice to all people whose hearts
“ are good, though their heads are weak;
“ and I have the honour to be,

M A D A M,

Your most obliged friend, and

Faithful humble servant,

CLELIA.”

A cha-

A character of a perfect good * woman, and consequently a very fine lady, taken from the proverbs of king Solomon.

The Character.

THOUGH this lady's form is majestick, yet her aspect is humble; she has gentle softness and tender fear; kinkness is all the art she uses, and innate purity all her rouge.

Her looks, her voice, her gesture, and whole behaviour is truly feminine.

She spends a great deal of her time in the adoration of the supreme being; a goodness, mixed with fear of offending, therefore gives a tincture to her whole behaviour.

Religion in her is a principle of reason enlivened with hope; it is an uniform and consistent tenor of action; it is strict without severity, compassionate without weakness; it is the perfection of that just behaviour that proceeds from the understanding, it is not the effect of an easy constitution.

Happy is the man who chearful Hymen has united to her; he has nothing to fear but to lose her, and survive her: for

* In the eastern language, good and great are synonymous terms.

his heart reposes itself upon her prudence, and finds itself refreshed, as a traveller's, fainting under the sun's sultry rays, reposes himself upon the tender grass beneath a shady tree: where she opens her mouth, soft persuasion and genuine graces flow from her lips; in her heart is wisdom, and in her tongue the law of kindness; her husband is distinguished for the choice he has made; for her price is far above rubies; she will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life; she stretcheth out her hands to the poor, yea she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

Her body, any more than her mind, is never trimmed and decked with the vain, gawdy ornaments of the age; her fancy, though full of life, is always restrained by her discretion; but she never appears without good sense, rational piety, modest hope, and chearful resignation; strength and honour are her clothing, and she shall rejoice in time to come.

Her greatest pleasure is the improvements of her childrens minds, and the good order of her household is her greatest glory, which adds a lustre to her native beauty; her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

Her

Her hands despise not labour, for she is skilled in all kinds of fine needle-work : as she foresees things at a distance, so she provides against all contingencies ; she acts regularly, therefore she is never in a hurry : it is true, she is always employed, but never embarrassed, because she does every thing in its proper time ; though the care of the household is her's, and she is charged with the burden of reproving for what is amiss, of refusing and sparing expence, things that make most other women disliked, yet she has acquired the love of her maidens, because they find not in her either passion, pride, peevishness, nor ill-humour ; with a glance of her eye they know her meaning, and are afraid to displease her ; the orders she gives are plain, for she commands nothing but what may be easily performed ; and she reproves with mildness ; nay, even amidst her reprehensions, she finds room to give encouragement to do better ; she looks well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

Many daughters have done virtuously ; but thou excellest them all.

Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain ; but a woman that faithfully discharges her several duties, she shall be praised.

Give

Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates of the land.

This is the character Clelia aims at obtaining; and this, adorned as Clelia is, with unpremeditated graces, will, I doubt not, make her husband always continue the fond lover. My reason for giving this character as Clelia sent it is, to convince my fair readers, that it is very possible for a philosophic soul to inhabit a beauteous form. Clelia believes, that her person, fortune, and youth, are no privilege against thought and reflection: Clelia never laughs at wisdom; but, with attention and pleasure, hears the gravity of its instruction. But, by the behaviour of the ladies of the present age, I am inclined to believe, that many amongst them are entire strangers to the true character of a fine lady, as no woman can come under that denomination that is not greatly good: let them behold what an amiable appearance, what a brilliant figure, a real good woman makes, who, as Pope says upon another occasion,

Is beloved, obeyed, adored.

And had I referred my fair countrywomen to the Bible, from whence this character

character was taken, I am apprehensive it would have given them a great aversion to it; though I am very certain, that if they studied that valuable book more than they do, this character would not be so scarce among us.

Clelia likewise sent a character of a modern fine lady, taken from a view of the town; I confess the portrait is very like the original; but the whole appearance of this lady is so odious, so frightfully ugly, that I believed it would be displeasing to many of my fair readers to behold it.

Indeed, if a foreigner was to see this character, as it is too notorious to all the world that we have for a long time had very little religion left among us, he would think we were now a nation of heathens, and, like some of the Indians, worshipped goddesses, who were evil spirits.

I hope my readers will pardon this digression, as I promise not to offend in this way again; and I now return to my history, and am to acquaint them, that Atticus and Cornelia live all the year at his seat in the country: Atticus is crowned with true glory; he therefore looks on grandeur with contempt; removed from all the anxieties of an ambitious life, he
wisely

wisely considers fortune sells at a dear rate her favours to hasty and impatient men; secure of himself, no trifles can depress his soul, or hinder her from soaring above the common accidents of life; his wishes are now confined to a few particular friends, selected for their great virtues from the whole of his acquaintance, and he hopes to pass the remainder of his days in retirement, a friend to all mankind.

For, to love the publick, to study universal good, and to promote the interest of the whole world, as far as lies in our power, is surely the height of human glory, as it makes that temper which we call divine.

Atticus keeps a constant table, and by that means avoids all expensive entertainments: Atticus and Cornelia are never without company; for they have a very agreeable neighbourhood; and the whole county is fond of them.

Atticus's house is in the modern taste, large, convenient, and quite equal to his fortune; and yet he has carefully avoided the folly or madness, for I know not which to call it, of the present age, in running out his estate to decorate his house: no; Atticus has followed Cicero's advice to his friend, where he tells him, that every wise owner should be an ornament to his house, and not the house an ornament to the owner.

The

The gardens indeed are laid out in the most elegant manner imaginable; and are very large; perhaps this was an indulgence that Atticus thought was due to Cornelia, who is remarkably fond of a fine garden.

The situation is by nature very delightful, and through a very fine wood, which in winter is a fence from stormy blasts, and in summer from scorching sun. Atticus has opened several vistas to extend his prospect; one discovers a stately palace, built for pride and luxury, which serves to terminate his view; a second presents a pastoral scene, where innocent shepherds are tending their fleecing care; another shows a beautiful river, which in wild meanders gently steals through the fertile meadows; in one part of this garden there is a grotto, made in imitation of that where Calypso detained the wise Ulysses; then by an easy ascent you enter a covered walk, which leads you to a spacious plain; in the midst of which there is a temple built in the Egyptian manner, and adorned with paintings by the best hands; from this you gradually descend into a wilderness of flowering shrubs, which is very large; and at last ends in a cave, like that renowned of old which taught wisdom; but indeed the beauties of this garden are so many, and so various, that
a more

a more particular description, I fear, would only tire my readers ; I shall hasten therefore to acquaint them, that a little while ago, as Atticus, Cornelia, and a very large party of gentlemen and ladies, were sitting in the grotto before-mentioned, the conversation turned on the poet Milton ; Cleander, who I have before named as the son of a particular friend of Atticus, and who is a professed admirer of our English bard, quoted some of his lines ; the book was immediately called for ; and Clelia said with a smile, she would have the honour of presenting that great man to the company, and immediately rose up to fetch it : at her return, when she was at a distance, one of the gentlemen said, here comes Clelia, like the ever-blooming Hebe ; to which Cleander answered in the words of an ingenious gentleman before quoted, but with the emphasis of a lover ;

Her form the beauties of her mind ex-
press'd ;
Her mind is beauty, by the Graces dress'd.

Clelia, continued Cleander,

Unknowing of her power, with artless
Innocence subdues the most rebellious
hearts ?

The

The manner of Cleander's pronouncing these words opened Cornelia's eyes ; and the next morning he desired a private audience of Atticus in his library, and there made a formal declaration of his passion for the engaging Clelia.

This excellent young man is now about twenty-eight years old, tho' he doth not appear to be more than of age. By the bounty of nature, and the advantages of a liberal education, he is now master of every genteel and polite accomplishment ; his person is justly proportioned, and finely turned ; his stature is tall, his complexion fair, but healthy ; his features exactly regular, his eyes hazle, expressing the greatest sweetness and uncommon delicacy, but without the least tincture of effeminacy.

His wit is lively, chearful, innocent, complaisant, and unaffected. His learning is universal, deep, and useful ; his temper is open, sincere, humane, benificent, placid, and affectionate. He is virtuous by inclination, for all his passions obey his reason, and are conducted by the strictest rules of honour and discretion.

Cleander's father was the younger brother of a baronet, of an ancient family.

The baronet had a clear estate of four thousand pounds per annum, but Cleander's father had only a younger child's fortune, which was fifteen thousand pounds ; he was brought up a merchant, and had only one son, this Cleander I now mention, and a daughter. As this gentleman was very successful in trade, and found Cleander was a youth of a promising genius, so he gave him a very liberal education ; and when Cleander left the university, his father, upon a calculation of his affairs, believing himself to be worth an hundred thousand pounds, sent Cleander to travel under the care and inspection of a truly worthy man, who was not only a very learned and pious divine, but in every respect a finished fine gentleman. Under this great man, Cleander received all the improvement that his friends could wish, or indeed, that a natural fine understanding could make ; and having finished his travels, Cleander was now upon his return to England, when he received an account, that his father had had some very, great and unforeseen losses in trade ; and as he intended to carry on business no longer than his son Cleander returned home, so he had been calling in his money and several debts, in order to settle

settle his affairs ; and that two of his correspondents were gone off with very large sums of his money in their hands. This was a blow few young men could have received in the manner that Cleander did ; the only effect it seemed to have upon him was, to make him impatient to offer his father all the consolation in his power ; but alas, this was denied him, for the good old man, unable to bear this stroke of fortune, had closed his eyes for ever before his son Cleander could arrive.

But he had the happiness to afford his mother great consolation, for he was to her at once both the indulgent husband, and the most dutiful son ; as she was a perfect good woman, so he was studious to prevent all her wishes, for he was no stranger to her great merit ; and Cleander's chief ambition seemed to be in rendering to her every kind office that could possibly make her life easy and agreeable : she survived his father about three years ; and if the blessing of a mother can in this licentious age be thought of any efficacy, Cleander now enjoys it to the full ; as to his sister, who inherited all the shining virtues of his family, and to whom Cleander had been a parent in the truest sense, fate deprived him of her just as she

was upon the point of marriage to a very worthy man, and to whom Cleander had most generously engaged to give a handsome fortune out of his own acquisition.

For Cleander, as I have before observed, was left young entirely to his own management, and upon a nice inspection into his affairs, he found, that out of his father's once large fortune, there did not now remain much above six hundred pounds a year ; this was too little for his great soul, who reflected he had a mother and a sister, who very justly called on him for assistance ; and who till now had passed their lives in affluence and ease, and were therefore to him meritorious objects of compassion.

Besides all this, he did not think if he had enjoyed the whole of this little estate, that it was sufficient to support him in idleness and pleasure ; he therefore immediately applied himself to business with the utmost industry ; and by merchandize, he in a few years made his fortune double ; for Cleander has held in the utmost scorn and detestation all those little arts in trade which too many people practice. He is by this means every where admired, as every body chuses to deal with a man of his integrity. His trade, when he quitted
business,

business, was become so extended, that in a few years he must have acquired an immense fortune. Thus have we seen this young man thrown from the height of prosperity, though in the heyday of his blood, as Shakespear has it, yet always equal to himself; for not a murmur, a single complaint against providence ever escaped his lips: educated to enjoy a fortune; but under a necessity to raise one; which makes me say, with my favourite poet,

Teach me, like thee, in various nature wise,
To fall with dignity, with temper rise;
Form'd by thy converse happily to steer,
From grave to gay, from lively to severe;
Correct with spirit, eloquent with ease,
Intent to reason, or polite to please.

But I must now return to the baronet I before mentioned, uncle to Cleander: this gentleman was a compleat miser; he never married for fear of expence, and lived in a little lodging with one servant, whom he almost starved as well as himself; the profits of his estate he continually laid out in purchasing more land; so that, for some time before his death, his paternal estate was increased to upwards of seven thousand pounds a year, and he spent not quite one hundred; he dared not make his

will, because it would put him in mind he must one day leave his dearly beloved self: this miserable being was now defuncted, and the title and estate was descended to Cleander; he only stayed to take possession, and bespeak his mourning; and then came post to Atticus's villa; but he did not acquaint him, Cornelia, nor Clelia, with this fortunate turn in his affairs till the morning that I have before mentioned, when he begged to know of Atticus and Cornelia if he might be permitted to make his addresses to the lovely maid; he said, he now came to lay his life and fortune at her feet, and should be compleatly happy if his passion met with their approbation; for though he long had loved her to excess, he never had presumed to disclose it to her, nor should not, even now, let the consequence to himself be what it would, if they disapproved of it; but my readers will believe this was too advantageous an offer for Clelia, to be refused by Atticus and Cornelia; and Cleander is now, with their approbation, endeavouring to make his addresses and himself agreeable to Clelia.

And as she has been long sensible of his uncommon merit, so that, with a woman of her way of thinking, will
have

have great weight; and I doubt not but in a little time we shall see Cleander completely blessed with his much admired and truly deserving Clelia.

I think I have nothing now to do, but once more to ask pardon of the publick, for presuming to lay so trifling a work before them; all I have to offer in my own defence is the goodness of my intention: it is true, I have told my fair countrywomen some disagreeable truths; but then I have, like a skilful physician, endeavoured to make the medicine as palatable as possible; and it would be injuring my fair countrywomen, not to believe that they will be my advocates, from a principle of gratitude, for bringing them acquainted with the amiable Portia, who was possessed of the whole secret of the grand cosmetick, or a system of true beauty; and indeed, my chief design, in publishing these sheets, is to inspire an emulation into my fair readers to imitate Portia's character, which I once more assure them is taken from real life.

But, if I should be so very unfortunate to have the town behold this first Essay of my genius with unfavourable eyes, I promise never more to be troublesome, as I have always been of the opinion, that, in
works

works of this kind, the author is too near himself to judge impartially; self-love quite blinds us; and to see our faults in the right light, we must view them with the same eyes that we do other peoples.

But if, on the contrary, the good-nature of my readers should incline them to candour and indulgence, it would then be an encouragement for Cornelia to present them with the history of Cleander and the blooming Clelia.

F I N I S.







1



